

Rare Collection

PS
1074
.B45
G66
1870
vol.4



L. Tom Perry Special Collections
Harold B. Lee Library
Brigham Young University

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY



3 1197 23195 3107

4 vols

240

588903

Effie's love to darling
Ruth

Given to Barbara Whittle
from her Mamma
1934.

Ethel Cotton
from her Granny's book

Dora Ellen Watney
(Auntie Effie's book)

64
6

GOOD LITTLE HEARTS

STORIES TOLD IN THE WOOD

a prize for Spelling.

Christmas 1902.

10 Wimborne Gardens
Ealing W.

Printed by R. Clark,

FOR

EDMONSTON & DOUGLAS, EDINBURGH.

LONDON . . . HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.

CAMBRIDGE . . . MACMILLAN AND CO.

DUBLIN . . . M^tGLASHAN AND GILL.

GLASGOW . . . JAMES MACLEHOSE.

GOOD LITTLE HEARTS
STORIES TOLD IN THE WOOD

By AUNT FANNY

AUTHOR OF 'NIGHTCAPS,' ETC.

'I love God and little children.'—RICHTER.

VOLUME IV.

EDINBURGH
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS
1870

[*All rights reserved.*]

THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

TO

SOPHIE, EDWIN, JIM, SALLY, WILLIE, AND

LITTLE JAK JOK.

THESE ARE THE NAMES OF

SIX "GOOD LITTLE HEARTS," WHO LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL

HOME IN EDINBURGH.

MOTTO FOR ALL GOOD LITTLE HEARTS.

“Do all the good you can,
In all the ways you can,
To all the people you can,
In every place you can,
At all the times you can,
As long as ever you can.”

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
IN THE WOOD	1
AUNT FANNY'S LETTER	15
FRED'S ANSWER	21
SOPHIE'S POETRY	25
PETER'S LETTER	29
AUNT FANNY IN THE WOOD	32
THE SECOND DAY IN THE WOOD	51
MASSA CHARLES AND THE SILVER DOLLAR	54
MASSA CHARLES AND MR. ACHILLES	66
AUNT FANNY'S CASTLE IN THE AIR	69
THE THIRD DAY IN THE WOOD	73
THE HISTORY OF FOUR LITTLE CHICKENS	75

	PAGE
YELLOWLEGS' STORY	91
REDCOMB'S STORY	101
THE FOURTH DAY IN THE WOOD	123
CHICKABIDDY'S STORY	126
COCKSPUR'S STORY	144
CONCLUSION	171

GOOD LITTLE HEARTS.



IN THE WOOD.

It was now September. The twilight shadows were longer and came earlier; great golden apples hung heavily from the trees, and the leaves had begun to fall,—many of them on the maple-trees were already of a royal scarlet,—and a soft, hazy veil lay upon the mountains.

Fred and his sisters and brothers now crowded more and more out-of-door frolicking into every day. Such capital times as they had! They would pack an incredible quantity of bread and butter, ginger-cakes, and apples into two or three baskets, enough to feed a small regiment, and march off into the woods, “to live wild, like the

Arabs," as Fred said, and come back with the sunset, jumping and laughing, rushing into the farm-house, to show with eager delight treasures of daintily fine mosses, feathery ferns, sprays of red barberries, and great bunches of wild verbenas, the leaves of which everybody must pinch and smell, and exclaim, "Oh, how delightful!"

Not a crumb was ever left of the provisions. If they started immediately after breakfast on their travels, they no sooner got into the woods than it became necessary to commence nibbling like squirrels, and the lids of the baskets were kept flapping up and down pretty much the whole time. The girls always took all their dolls, and the boys never went without their tool-box; "because, you see," Peter wisely remarked, "if we should happen to get lost in the woods, we could cut down the trees, and build a comfortable log-house to sleep in."

One day, as they went singing and skipping

through the windings of the wood, they came suddenly upon a lovely little glade, where the sun shone soft and warm. A flock of flame-breasted robins were popping about the emerald ring of grass, so fine and green that the fairies might have had a dance there on moonlight nights. Perhaps the pretty birds were picking up dainty crumbs left of the fairy feast, which came off after the dance, like other people's; if they were, they never stayed to tell the children, but flew away into the trees.

"Oh, how *delightful*!" cried little Kitty, clasping her hands in ecstasy.

"Isn't it jolly?" shouted the boys.

"Let's sit down in a circle, with our basket in the middle, and play we were a band of gipsies," said Lou, twirling round, and making a cheese.

"And begin eating and telling stories," added Peter, who was remarkably fond of both.

No sooner said than done. They all rushed

pell-mell upon the hard-worked covers of the baskets, and pulled out the bread and butter, ginger-cakes, and apples, in double-quick time. They plucked great burdock-leaves, which, Lou said, made jolly plates; these were set in a circle, and on each one was arranged half-a-slice of bread and butter, one apple, and three cakes. You have no idea how very nice they looked.

Then down sat the children in the most delightful bustle, their cheeks glowing and all dimples with the laughter which rang like music through the wood. The robin-redbreasts eyed them askance from the boughs above, and longed to join a company which had such quantities of nice ginger-cakes and apples; and the little squirrels peeped out of their nests in the trees, and would have given the tips of their whiskers to have been invited to such a grand feast.

“Here’s happiness!” cried Peter, taking out a jack-knife with eleven blades. “Now I’m going

to pare this apple and throw the skin three times round my head. If it makes a letter beginning the name of any of you gipsies, that one must make a nonsense verse."

While he was busy paring, and the rest busy staring with all their eyes at the operation, Fred slyly took the opportunity to pick out all the light-coloured ginger-cakes, and put them on his own burdock-leaf, as he greatly preferred them.

The peel was thrown, and fell in a large letter S; whereupon Sophie, with a merry twinkle in her eye, pointed at Fred, and said,—

"There was a young dandy from town,
Who could not bear cakes that were brown,
But when they were white,
He stuffed with delight—
That ingenious young dandy from town."

"Not bad," observed Fred, coolly biting into one of his cakes, and making a comical face at

Sophie. "Fling away, Peter! I'm all ready with my verse."

Peter let the skin go with a high flourish, and, sure enough, it fell down in a big letter F.

Fred jumped up, his eyes sparkling with mischievous fun, and making a low bow to Sophie, and striking an attitude with his arm out like a pump-handle, sang out,—

"There was a fine Miss in a bonnet,
A big bumble-bee sat upon it,
When they said, 'It's a whopper!'
She cared not a copper—
That courageous young Miss in a bonnet."

"Oh—so there is!" exclaimed Kitty and Lou,
—"a tremendous bee!"

"Eee!! ee!!" screamed Sophie, who was terribly afraid of them. "Take it off! take it off!"—while the bee, discovering by this time that the pretty pink sun-bonnet was not a great cabbage-rose, as he had at first supposed, quietly took

himself off, to her immense relief, and amid the laughter of the rest; while Fred triumphantly shouted out, "Paid her off! Didn't I?"

All this time Lou had been quietly eating Peter's apple, giving generous bites to Kitty and Bob.

"Why, where's my apple?" inquired Peter, who just thought he would refresh himself with a taste.

"You can't think how nice it was," said Lou, holding up the core.

"Oh, you little brigand of a gipsy! I'll pay you off! Here goes for the letter L."

Round and round went the peel, and round and round went Peter to help it, till, getting his legs in a hard twist, he reeled and fell flat into a bush, in a sitting position and a great state of astonishment, while the peel, flying high in the air, was caught by the bough of a tree.

The children clapped their hands, screaming

with laughter, and Lou danced up to him and cried out,—

“ There was a bombastic young Mister,
Who tied up his legs in a twister ;
He twirled round and round,
And came flat on the ground,—
Which astonished that lively young Mister.”

In an instant Peter started up, seized Lou, and twirled her round and round till they both fell down together. Then all the party, quite breathless with laughter and fun, sat once more in a circle. They bit their bread and butter, and cakes, into wild bears, American eagles, and fishes. Fred even fashioned a profile likeness of Peter, with his nose in the air ; he poked out the eye with a twig, which gave him an amiable squint, and was very much admired ; after which he ate Peter in two mouthfuls, and said he was remarkably tough ; and the rest devoured their birds, beasts, and fishes, and finished off with the apples for dessert ; then, leav-

ing plenty of crumbs for the redbreasts and squirrels, they started for home, the long slant lines of the western sun shining red and glorious through the aisles of the wood.

“ Well, Fred,” said his mother, as the children came trooping in, just as the tea-bell rang, “ your friend, the fat old lady at the post-office, has been writing you a letter ; her son Gam brought it, and was very much disappointed not to see you. I told him you lived in the woods, and only slept here as a favour, but I would give it you the moment you came in.”

“ Writing me a—letter !” cried Fred, astonished.

“ Yes ; run and brush your hair, and you shall have it.”

They all dashed up-stairs, two steps at a time, and washed faces and hands, and brushed hair and clothes, in desperate haste ; then dashed down again, two steps at a time, except Peter, who slid down the banister with great dexterity, and little

Bob, who came flying after him with a wild
“whoop!”

The moment they were seated at the table, Fred opened his letter, and read it aloud as follows:—

“look hear my frisky yung frend you aint harf so crazy abeout yure ant fanny as yu used to was its nun of my bisnes only a middel aged man arrove hear day b4 yesterday and sez he ‘air yu the post offis?’ ‘I be’ sed I ‘do yu no fred?’ sez he ‘2 be shure I do’ sed I ‘he darnses reound hear like a poppit’ ‘Wel’ sez he ‘his ant fanny has ben runnin’ orf down tu new having shese staing with a ant of hern and shese writ a letter to sa so’—then he giv me a letter, and if its all 1 to yu I want yu tu cum fur it, fur I want to C yu makin faces, jumpin’ on barls, swingin’ reound, and hur-rayin—yu better cum to onct—my respecks to yure famly
trooly yurne

“taberthy marble.”

“Well, I never!” exclaimed Fred, laughing. “What a funny letter! how it’s spelt! I’ll go straight off now. I don’t want any tea.”

He was rushing out of the room, when his mother called him back. “It will be quite dark before you get there,” she said. “You must wait till to-morrow morning.”

He came back immediately, for he never dreamed for a moment of disobeying her, and had never heard of such a thing as “teasing his mother into letting him go,” as I am very sorry to know some children try to do with their parents. All that he and the others did to hasten the matter was to go to bed rather earlier than usual, and sleep like tops of the first quality.

Just at sunrise the next morning Fred woke with a start. Then he rumbled up his hair with both hands in the most dreadful manner; then he gave such a stretch that his arms nearly popped out of their sockets; then he doubled up his legs,

and shut one eye to see if he felt very sleepy ; then he thought of what the Duke of Wellington said, —“ A man ought never to take but one turn in bed, and that is a turn *out* ;” and accordingly *out* Fred tumbled on all fours, and put his stockings on in such haste that his toes went into the heels, and the seams ran all round his legs, and he was obliged to give a wild kick up in the air and lie on his back for half-a-minute before they would come right. But after this he washed himself without breaking the crockery, and dressed without tearing off more than two buttons ; and forcing himself to be grave and still for a moment, so as to say his prayers reverently, he was off with a bound to the post-office.

“ Well, my Babe-in-the-Wood,” said Mrs. Marble, shaking hands with him, —“ I’m told you live with the bears and squirrels nowadays.”

“ Yes, I’m a savage,” answered Fred, drumming on the counter ; “ I ate a boy yesterday.”

“Look here, I hope you haven’t got any taste for old women. I’ll have you put in a cage. Eat a boy?”

“Yes, made out of gingerbread. But where’s the letter? that’s what’s the matter,”—and Fred suddenly stood on his head, and looked with the soles of his feet at the old lady.

“Look here, that’s genteel!” said Mrs. Marble, very much astonished; “you don’t deserve the letter, a-scaring me so,”—and she threw it up in the air.

It fell down into a brown earthenware bowl on the top shelf. The next instant Fred was up there like a monkey, and the moment after he was out of the shop, shouting “Good-bye, Mrs. Marble. Put my compliments, marked ‘Glass, with care,’ into the first little parcel you send to the man in the moon, and don’t catch your death of cold before I see you again.”

“How I do like that ’ere boy,” laughed the old

lady, as she settled down to her knitting; "he's full of monkey-tricks; but they are gentleman monkey-tricks."

The "gentleman monkey," who would have been highly delighted with this compliment if he had heard it, went home over the fields, rushing at all the hedges, clearing them and alighting on the other side like a feather; springing up to the top of the big boulders which lay in his path, and jumping down; "brushing the morning dew," and getting the bottoms of his trousers perfectly wet through; and walked into the breakfast-room glowing with exercise, good-humour, health, and happiness.

"Oh, you darling!" cried his sisters and brothers, as he held the letter up.

"Oh, you good-for-nothing boy!" said his mother; "your feet are soaking wet."

"Oh, mamma," pleaded little Kitty, tenderly, "please excuse him; he didn't mean to."

“Come, help me to dry them, Puss,” said Fred, holding his hand out affectionately to Kitty.

“How can the cat help you?” asked Peter.

“Why, don’t you know?” said Kitty: “Puss is me. You mustn’t tease Fred when he has been so amiable.”

They all went out into the kitchen with “amiable” Fred, who seemed to come in for no end of compliments; and while his shoes and the edges of his trousers were steaming and drying by the fire, he read to them

AUNT FANNY’S LETTER.

New Haven,* September, 1864.

DEAR FRED AND COMPANY,—

What do you think my kind aunt said to me the first moment I entered her handsome house in

* New Haven is a very large city in the State of Connecticut, and the seat of Yale College.

New Haven? She said,—“Why, Fan, you are looking perfectly miserable.”

“Why, auntie, how you talk!” I answered. “Haven’t I been living all summer in Pittsfield, staring at the grand Berkshire hills, on purpose to get all the ‘miserable’ out of my phiz? It must be that the celebrated ‘mountain air’ has blown it on, instead of off; and then I have been very busy writing to my friend Fred.”

“Well, Miss,” she said, in a spunky, determined way, “you are not going to write a word to your friend Fred in *my* house. You must eat, sleep, ride about, laugh and grow fat. I shall have you weighed this minute, and again before you leave, and every pound you gain I shall charge your friend Fred a hundred dollars.”*

And so I have done nothing but eat, sleep, and ride about. There is a great plate on the table in my room, which I never can empty. It is kept

* About twenty pounds.

filled in some mysterious way with Seckel, Buffum, Bartlett, and other pears with funny names and delicious flavours, early grapes, and nice crisp crackers. This is to sustain me, in case I don't get enough to eat at breakfast, dinner, and tea, though the table is regularly loaded with good things. Then I am told every morning after breakfast—"Fan, run out in the garden and eat some grapes : they're good for you ;" and I run, for I *must* mind, you know. And she gravely advises me to put a biscuit under my pillow, for fear I should wake up and feel hungry in the middle of the night. Did you ever hear of such an aunt ?

And now, oh dear ! such a number of pleasant things have happened, and you can't know about them because I *must* set a good example. I must practise what I preach, and mind my aunt ; but before I go home to New York, how would you like to see me at the farm-house for two or three

days? I hope you and the rest of the children won't jump quite out of your wits for joy at this proposal, for I am afraid such extraordinary gymnastics might frighten the farmer's wife, who is not accustomed to them. Perhaps the good lady can give me a sky parlour at the top of the house, or a nest of sweet new hay in the barn, or, better than anything else, she may have a tent. A good minister and his family went off, while I was in Pittsfield, to the Adirondack Mountains, with a tent and a tea-kettle, to live in the woods for two weeks: so try and get me a tent by all means, and if the people who sleep in tents tell the truth, I shall have a lively time of it. According to those funny gentlemen, the entomologists, who study the ways of insects with such delight, I shall have all the "apteras," "ipteras," and "opteras," or, in one word, "insects," winged and crawling, paying me visits, glibly scampering over my garments and under my sleeves, and then suddenly,

with a fee, fa, fo, fum ! eating me up ! And yet those funny gentlemen with the long name will gaze enraptured on these “ elegant creatures,” with their wonderful bodies, lovely wings, lustrous eyes, quantities of legs, and splendid antennæ ; which last word is Latin for “ feelers.”

I’ll tell you : if little Bob will array himself in a tin helmet and top-boots, with his trusty wooden



sword by his side, and promise to come out and do battle in my behalf against the black beetles and

bumble-bees, then I shall be able to sleep in the tent in security and comfort. I've drawn a picture here of Bob fighting a big bumble-bee, to show you how valiant he will look.

And now all you have to do is to let me know if the good farmer's wife can make room for me in or out of a tent, and in about a week from this I'll fly over on a broomstick, or a railway, whichever you prefer.

With kind regards to your parents, and love and kisses for their children, I am your loving

AUNT FANNY.

P.S.—Read this, and make rhyme of it :—

“ If I, dear Fred, can come to thee,
You'll tell me by post.”

FRED'S ANSWER.

September ——

OH, AUNT FANNY !

There's plenty of room, and we are perfectly delighted ! but I'm so sorry the farmer's wife hasn't the first grain of a tent, which is *such* a pity !

Why, hearing you tell stories will be just as good as reading them. Peter and Sophie are looking over my shoulder ; they say, " Oh, Fred ! a great deal better." So come just as quickly as you can, and by all means on a broomstick. I have been writing some poetry. Peter says it's Something short and snub-nosed, like our dog.

Never mind, Aunt Fanny ; I want your opinion.
Here it is :—

(First Verse.)

Summer's gone,
Autumn's here ;
Winter is
Very near.
Apples hang
On the tree,
Red as e'er
They can be.
Don't you love
Apple-pie ?—

oh, I tell you what, Aunt Fanny! isn't it jolly? I
know you must love it, and—

So do I.

(Second Verse.)

Bull-frogs croak,
Rabbits run
All about
In the sun.

Nuts are ripe,
Berries too ;
Pheasant-pie
Now is due.
Turkeys play
In the yard,—

without the faintest idea that they are to be killed
at Christmas, Aunt Fanny ; if they had, they
would think it—

Rather hard.

(Third Verse.)

Don't I like
Country fun !
Getting brown
In the sun ;
Playing horse,
Driving cows,
Roasting corn,
Making rows !
• Riding home
On the hay,—

which is the jolliest fun, Aunt Fanny ! though, if you mind it's being prickly, it—

Doesn't pay.

(Fourth Verse.)

Now good-bye.

This is all.

Aren't these lines

Rather small ?

Maybe so ;

But you see

I *can* make

Poet—*ree* !

In the days

Of my youth,—

though I had to ask mamma how to spell “ rabbits,” Aunt Fanny, and that's exact—

Ly the truth.

Sophie and Peter *will* look over my shoulder to see what I am writing, and just as I had finished my verses, which I hope you think are perfectly

splendid, that disrespectful Sophie screams out, —“ You call *that* poetry! two words to a line? Give *me* the pen and ink; *I'll* write more words in a line than you have put in a whole verse.”

She may try. Sophie writes :—

“ Now, Aunt Fanny, did you ever! Such poetry as Fred has written out!

“ I hope you can tell, for nobody else can, whatever it is all about.

“ But for fear you can't, *I'll* write a piece, to let you know what we're doing and saying;

“ I hope you won't think it wrong, but the fact is, we are all the time laughing and playing.

“ Our school-books are safe in New York. Isn't that most delightful to hear?

“ And so we go out blackberrying, and get more tears in our clothes than would keep a ragman in rags for a year.

“ We take tin pails to put the berries in ; but, somehow, all we don’t spill we *eat*,—

“ Except the green ones, which, perhaps you know, are not green, but red, and those we give the little pigs for a treat.

“ Poor things ! one was squealing murder last night, as though it had stomach-ache

“ With eating green fruit ; and I should think it had ! for all we gave it it would take.

“ But what do you suppose ! they were killing it ! to roast for our dinner, maybe ;

“ But I’m sure I can’t eat any of it, for now it has been singed and washed, it looks exactly like a baby !

“ Then we have ridden on loads of hay, choke-full of grasshoppers and crickets ;

“ Besides climbing the fence of the poultry-yard, and Lou got hung by her hoops to the pickets !

“And we’d *such* a time getting her off! Then we went to catch a little colt;

“But, would you believe it! the nasty thing dashed away with a tremendous flourish of his tail and a bolt:

“So we couldn’t catch it after all. Then there’s hunting eggs up in the loft;

“Such fun! I don’t wonder the hens lay there, the hay is so cosy and soft.

“You can’t think what splendid hills it makes, and castles to attack and defend;

“Besides balls to pelt each other, and places for hide-and-seek without end.

“So you see there’s plenty to amuse us; and do you know, I’m getting so fat,

“I weigh ninety-nine pounds and a half, and am growing visibly at that.

“Then when night comes, we’re so sleepy, we go to bed the minute it is dark,

“And wake up the next morning *so* early! and feeling as fresh as any lark.

"Then we rush down to Mrs. Marble's, and hurry her into her shoes,

"So she can open the mail-bag and let us get a letter from you, and all the news.

"She's a dear old thing with her carpet-shoes ; Fred says she's a perfect *alley-tor*.*

"Well, Aunt Fanny, I must close here, for I really cannot think of any more.

"I hope you will like this letter when you see it's every bit of it in rhymes ;

"It's not very well written, but what can I do ? even papa scratches around dreadfully, these hard times.

"And if *he* scratches, how can I be expected to do any better ?

"So now I will say good-bye, for I've come to the end of my letter.

"I hope you'll be very happy in New Haven, just as happy as happy can be ;

"And, oh ! come soon to Fred, Kitty, and Bob, Peter, Lou, and your niece
SOPHIE."

* An *alley-tor* is a large painted marble.

“ P. S.—Mamma and papa send their kindest regards, and say they hope you have made up your mind to have a wild time of it here with us. We hope so too.

SOPHIE.”

FROM PETER.

DEAR AUNT FANNY,

We have nearly cracked our brains trying to find out *your* rhyme. We could not see it anywhere ; when, one day, we were all in Mrs. Marble’s store, buying maple sugar. It had been raining, and Fred rolled up his pantaloons ; so Mrs. Marble saluted him with—“ Look here, young bantam, was your Aunt Fanny’s letter *extree* interestin’?”

“ Yes, it was *so*,” answered Fred. “ She’s coming to see us the latter end of next week : I wish it was here now.”

Just then Gam came in. “ My son Gam can knock you into “ the latter end of next week,” if

you're in such a hurry," observed the old lady, grinning.

"I'm agreeable," said Gam.

But Fred thought that, on the whole, he would wait; he wanted a day or two to find out Aunt Fanny's curious poetry.

"Let me see her poetry," said Mrs. Marble. So Fred took your letter out of his pocket, and Mrs. Marble pulled down her spectacles, and we all clustered round, expecting some fun.

"Look here," she said, pointing with her knitting needle, and reading,—

"If—I—dear Fred, can—come to thee, you'll tell me by—what's this?—*port*? She can't mean 'port wine';"—then, reading again,—

"You'll tell me by"—then she spelt it, to make sure—"p-o-s-t."

"*We see it! we see it!* we all screamed so suddenly that the old lady jumped up in her chair, her spectacles fell off, and she nearly swallowed

her knitting-needle. "Oh, thank you, Mrs. Marble!" we cried :—

"If I, dear Fred, can come to thee,
You'll tell me by p-o-s-t."

Then Gam came out with such a funny speech, in his dry, grave way, that we nearly died laughing.

"Wall, that air fine!" he said. "My lovely, blessed old mammy has beat all you learned folks! Who'd 'a' thunk it?"

Mrs. Marble was so tickled at Gam's compliment, that she gave him a great lump of maple sugar; and he went off to his forge, munching it and laughing.

Good-bye till next week, dear Aunt Fanny.

Your affectionate

PETER.

AUNT FANNY IN THE WOOD.

ONE charming breezy morning, about a week after Fred, Sophie, and Peter, had written and sent their letters, the children were, as usual, spending the day in the wood. They had been hard at work—I mean play—at “Hide-and-Seek,” “Puss in the Corner,” “Duck on a Rock,” “I Spy,” and “Old Witch,”—which is a splendid play,—and were now sitting on the grass in the little fairy glade, eating lunch and singing.

Sophie had a sweet, birdlike voice, but both Fred and Peter declared that they never could make out above a word or two, when she sang—

“Oh, cast that shadow from thy brow,
My dark-eyed one ; be gay a while,” etc.

“You can’t think, said Peter, “how funny it

sounds when you tell us to ‘Cast that ha-ow, wow, wow, wow.’ I always think you are barking at the company.”

“I don’t ‘wow, wow, wow,’” said Sophie, laughing.

“Yes you do. Now listen; Fred and I will give you a duet in your own sentimental style;” and making a sign to Fred, both boys put their heads very much on one side, and commenced, in die-away mincing voices, this romantic ditty :—*

“Oh, if I had a lumty-tum lumty-tum too,
In the land of the olive and fig,
I would sing on the lumty-tum tumti to you,
And play on the thingumy-jig.

“And if in the lunti-tum battle I fall,
A tumti-tum’s all that I crave ;
Oh, bury me deep in the what-you-may-call,
And plant thingumbobs over my grave.”

* Not written by “Aunt Fanny.”

All the children were perfectly screaming with laughter over this ridiculous performance, and never noticed a little figure walking quickly, but softly, towards them, getting behind the trees whenever she could, and now quite close.

“What’s the fun?” she quietly asked.

“Here’s Aunt Fanny!!” every one exclaimed, in the utmost astonishment. “*Where’s the broomstick!*!”

“Oh, I sent that back to the moon,” she answered, laughing and sitting down in the midst of them, while they kissed a bright colour in her pale cheeks, and holding out six apples and twelve ginger-cakes all at once, begged her to eat them up instanter, and then tell all about her adventures in New Haven. “And mind, dear Aunt Fanny,” they added, “you must begin at the very beginning.”

“Very well,” she said. “At the *very* beginning :—When the rail-cars stopped, we found our-

selves down deep in a dreadful, dirty, dark, damp, direful, dismal, doleful, dreary dungeon, and concluded that the mayor of the city had ordered everybody and everybody else to be shut up there by way of a little joke. We got out of the carriages with the rest, and began pushing, snatching, and dodging, and tripping each other up; and I went wandering and gandering, or goosering about, perfectly confused and stupid; and everybody else was hurrying and skurrying, and a dozen dirty men with whips were spitting tobacco and hollowing at me. In the midst of all this turmoil and uproar the steam-whistle gave a high screech, upon which I gave a high shriek, as I always do; then somebody put a hand upon my shoulder, and I screamed again, for I was sure that it was a policeman going to gobble me up, although I had been on my very best behaviour coming by the railway. I had only spoken to four children, and given a peach or two to a wounded soldier.

“So I turned round *sharp* and said, ‘Let me alone!’ to the supposed policeman, and met the kind smiling face of my uncle-in-law, as Alice calls him.

“‘Oh!’ I screamed, seizing both his hands, ‘how glad I am! Please carry me out of this place.’

“‘Don’t you think you could walk, if you took my arm?’ he asked, in his slow deliberate way.

“I saw the mischievous twinkle in his eyes, so I said, ‘You know very well what I meant;’ and we went up a flight of great stone steps, and through a large hall, and then we came out upon a pleasant bustling street where the sun was shining; and glad enough was I to see it.

“Then we got into a nice little carriage, and Dan—that was the coachman—drove us past the beautiful college green to my aunt’s house. I found her standing at the door with her little daughter Lila, and when we went up-stairs there

was another dear good aunt, and we all sat down and had a long old-fashioned talk."

"What about?" inquired the children, eagerly.

"Oh, all about the other aunts and uncles, cousins, and cats in the family. The next day my children Sarah and Alice marched off, and up to the very top of East Rock.

"Oh, I wish we could have gone with them!" Lou cried.

"So do I," continued Aunt Fanny, "for they declared that the view was splendid, and wanted me to go to. But I thanked them, and said East Rock would faint flat away with astonishment at seeing *me* there. A few days after they marched off again,—this time to West Rock,—and took with them a tall, handsome, young student who had just graduated at Yale College, and my aunt's son, a darling lovely boy. His name is Fred; and that may have something to do with his great merit," said Aunt Fanny, glancing slyly at Fred.

“To be sure it has,” said Fred. “Everybody says *I’m* a perfectly lovely boy,—don’t they, Kitty?”

“A—h, yes,” answered the affectionate little sister, getting closer to him.

“Well,” continued Aunt Fanny, “the next day a lady called to see me, bringing with her a sweet little girl, as demure and shy as could be.”

“What was her name?” asked the children immediately.

“Minnie; and her blue eyes glanced sideways so pleasantly into mine that I hunted up the dear little gray kitten, and the black and tan terrier, to amuse her; and then, before I knew it, I fell in love with her mother. I knew before that one of her darlings had been called Home, and the saddened tone of her sweet winsome voice told me that she was still grieving,—though full of tender faith that the little one, no longer here, was robed with white radiance and crowned with glory in heaven.

“ We had such a charming pleasant conversation,—at least it was so to me,—and I was delighted when she asked me to come and see her; and three days after I went. We drove out into the beautiful suburbs of the city, passed some handsome houses, and one quite gorgeous. It was painted yellow, with brown copings, and had wings, and top-knots, and two great black statues seven feet high on the portico,—one on either side of the front door; and a fountain with Neptune shooting water out of his treble-barrelled trident at everything and everybody, and ever so many more curiosities which I had not time to observe. Then we drove past a little village called Westville, I believe, and went very near the great West Rock, which loomed up and frowned at us; and all this time we were going so gently up-hill, that a most beautiful picture burst upon us at last with a sudden splendour that almost took my breath away.

“ ‘ Oh, look !’ I screamed, pointing, and poor Dan scuttled head-over-heels out of the carriage, thinking the wheel had come off.

“ ‘ An’ sure, I don’t see nothin’ the matter wid ’em at all at all,’ said Dan, who was down on his knees, with his head under the carriage, staring at the inside of the axles ; at which Sarah and Alice burst out laughing ; but I had neither eyes nor ease for anything but the lovely, lovely view. There below, stretching away from the meadows, was the beautiful city, with its steeples and grand old elms,* the white and green flooded with golden sunshine, while far in the distance was the smooth treacherous sea, smiling back to the smiling heaven. I was thanking my Father in my inmost heart for this new delight, with the tears trembling in my eyes, and wondering why we could not be better and happier in a world so full of beauty, when

* New Haven is called the “ Elm City,” from the number and magnificence of its elm trees.

a carriage came out of a gate just beyond, and, as it passed, I saw in it the very lady I was coming to visit.

“I was so sorry and disappointed; but I went on to the door, and was leaving my card, when, upon looking around, I found that the lady had followed me, and was just getting out of her carriage.

“ ‘Oh, please don’t,’ I entreated, for I could not bear to think that I might be preventing some engagement.

“ ‘But we were just going to see you,’ she answered, smiling, and then she introduced her husband, who was with her, and we all went in and sat down in the parlour.

“Perhaps I had better not tell any more.”

“Oh, oh! why not?” cried the children, looking exceedingly disappointed. “Was it so splendid?”

“Why, no,—not like the gorgeous house I told

you about, for it was a perfectly delightful old-fashioned farm-house. There wasn't the least bit of a statue seven feet high anywhere to be seen, but on the front door, doing duty as a knocker, was the very image of Gruffanuff, the porter who was so impertinent to the fairy Blackstick in Thackeray's story of 'The Rose and the Ring. You can't think how ridiculous he looked! The story tells us that he was turned into metal and screwed fast to the door, with his arms over his head and his legs doubled up under him; and he is roasted in summer, and frozen in winter, to punish him for his wickedness.

"But I was so glad to be at last in the very home of one whom I had known so long and so well, though this was the first time I had ever seen his face."*

"Why, Aunt Fanny, how—can—that—be?"

* Donald G. Mitchell, author of "My Farm at Edge-wood," etc.

asked Peter, with a painful impression crossing his mind that, for the first time in his experience, Aunt Fanny was telling a regular fib.

“Don’t a great many children know *me* whom I have never seen? I wish I *did* know them all!” she added, looking very regretful and sad.

“Oh yes!” they exclaimed. “You went to see some one whose books you have read?”

“Yes,—and admired beyond expression for the purity, goodness, and beauty of every thought and word. Judging by his books, *I would trust my children to him*, which is the climax of my faith in a human being.”

“Oh, Aunt Fanny” said the children, “after *that*, you must tell who he is.”

“No; you must guess.”

So they guessed and guessed, but did not come near the name. “Well,” said Aunt Fanny, “come to me one by one and I will whisper it, for I don’t want the robins and squirrels to hear:

they would fly off, and tell their Aunt Tabithys and all the world beside."

She whispered, and the moment the children heard they one and all exclaimed, "Why, how strange we did not think of it the very first thing ! What a perfect marvel !"

"I think so too," said Aunt Fanny ; "and a more enchanting marvel is, that, instead of feeling disappointed, as one sometimes does when they visit great authors, I grew more and more delighted ; and when a few moments after some lovely little children came skipping and dancing in, and I had coaxed them to come close to me, and one darling had laid her golden head on my breast, and let me hug her just as much as I liked, I was quite happy.

"In the parlour were some rare paintings, beautiful bronzes, a singular Chinese screen, and skilfully carved furniture, some of which looked as if it had come out of the palaces in Venice and

Rome; but the library delighted me far more. I felt as if I had got into fairy-land. I don't remember seeing any splendid furniture in it, and not a bit of gilding save what the sun made. But the most skilful cabinet-maker never dreamed in his honest rosewood heart of creating such charming things. Far higher and rarer taste, helped by tender and dainty hands, had made this room beautiful.

“Just before we entered it, I was shown a large and very fine engraving of one of Rosa Bonheur's cattle-pieces. You all know that Rosa Bonheur is a French lady, and a painter of very great talent. The frame of the picture was very singular. It was fashioned of small pointed twigs with the bark on; and all across the bottom was a beautiful little rustic fence over which the great, patient oxen seemed to be gazing.

“‘Oh,’ I cried to my host, ‘where did you get that frame? It is in such perfect harmony with the picture!’

“‘I keep a carpenter in the house,’ he answered.

“‘But,’ I returned, ‘what a genius he must be ! Where did you find such a treasure ?’

“On this he laughed a funny little laugh, and the eyes of his children danced and sparkled, as much as to say ‘We know,’ and then all at once I knew too who the wonderful carpenter was. Do you !”

“He made it himself,” cried Sophie and Fred.

“I wish he would make one for my kitten picture,” said Kitty, earnestly. “It would be so lovely.”

“It would, indeed,” said Aunt Fanny ; “and this makes one of the charms of the library,—the home-made rustic ornaments. Upon the window-sills are tiny gardens of roses and ferns and velvet mosses, oh, so beautiful ! while from above trails down the gray moss which hangs from the oak-trees in my now unhappy Southern home. The sight of it brought the quick tears into my eyes.

“ You cannot imagine how beautiful these windows looked thus decorated. Over one is thrown a rustic arch, in the very centre of which is a little Swiss cottage, and upon the steps going down either side of the arch are beautiful little bronze figures; while the delicate leaves and tendrils of an ivy-vine twine around the doors and windows of the tiny cottage.”*

“ Oh, how enchanting !” exclaimed the children.
“ It is indeed, a fairy place.”

“ I wish I could see it,” said Kitty mournfully.

“ I wish you could; and I wish you could race outside with those darling children. There did not seem to be any cross old gardeners about, for they picked and brought me some flowers as soon as we had gone out-of-doors. You must know I once visited at a beautiful place on the Isle of Wight, and the gentleman who owned it told

* The ivy grew from a slip which came from Kenilworth Castle.

me he would not dare to pick a single flower without his gardener gave him permission."

"How perfectly stupid," said Peter. "I would not give a button for such a garden."

"I wouldn't either," said Aunt Fanny. "All at once I spied a row of beehives under a sheltered thatched roof.

"‘There!’ I exclaimed,—‘you tell stories! I thought you would not keep bees, because they stung one of your dear little ‘curly pates.’

"‘The hives are perfectly empty,’ he quietly answered. And of course I had to beg his pardon, which I did like a naughty child who had been saucy.

"I wanted to stay here the whole day; but after one more look at the garden, the sloping hill-side so smooth and green, and the pretty fountain, and a good kiss from the children, and a long, happy gaze at the splendid view, I had to say good-bye;—but I do wish that tall husband of mine would buy me a farm right away."

“So he shall!” cried the children, kissing her. “We’ll get at Uncle Fanny,* and pinch him and tickle him till he says ‘yes.’”

“Oh, do,” said Aunt Fanny, laughing. “He don’t get half the pinching he deserves: and now, I think, we had better strike a bee-line for home.”

Up they all jumped, Kitty and Bob on either side of Aunt Fanny, and the others in Indian file, and off they marched all singing at the tops of their voices,—

“Ain’t I glad I’m out of the wilderness,
Out of the wilderness,
Out of the wilderness,—
Ain’t I glad I’m out of the wilderness.
Johnny stole a ham.”

Which ridiculous ditty had neither rhyme nor

* The children in the United States call Aunt Fanny’s husband Uncle Fanny.

reason ; and that, perhaps, was the very best of it,
for

“ A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the wisest men ;”—

and this particular party were *very wise people* in
the laugh-and-grow-fat line.

THE SECOND DAY IN THE WOOD.

THE next morning was so fresh and bright that Aunt Fanny said, "Suppose we all go to the woods again."

"Oh! and tell stories!—that is, *you* will," answered the children, delighted.

"Me? I'm company. *You* must entertain *me*."

"Oh, Aunt Fanny, please don't be company," entreated Peter. "Is she company?" he asked of the rest.

"No; she's a darling;" and with this answer they all fell upon her, and created such a riot that the farmer's wife thought the very house was tumbling about her ears, and, with her eyes starting out of their sockets and flour up to her

elbows, she rushed in to see what the racket was about.

Poor Aunt Fanny, between them all, had been rolled over on the carpet, and every one of the little scamps was trying to help her up by pulling her different ways.

“Oh, you little imps of mischief!” cried Aunt Fanny, as soon as she could catch her breath with laughing, “you ought to have *toko peambo*, every one of you!”

“Wh-a-t’s that?” they eagerly asked.

“It’s a good beating. In Charleston, when one little negro gets angry with another, he says, ‘Ki boy! you better lef dat marble be. I gib you toko.’ This reminds me of something that happened to my dear father when he lived in Charleston; and as you won’t let me be company, I’ll tell it to you in the woods to-day.”

This was delightful, the children said; and soon after, with some delicious turn-over pies added to

their usual lunch of cakes and apples, they marched off, a merry, happy party, all talking at once in the very loudest tones, making twenty grimaces a minute, and gesticulating as if their ears had been corked up, and they had to listen with their eyes and elbows.

It took a long time to get to the beautiful little glade, there was so much business to be done in the way of playing "who'll catch me," climbing trees, and keeping up an incessant chattering, as if the wood were full of monkeys. The squirrels went scampering off in fright, and every other living thing hid away, and little Bob said they were monarchs and *monarchesses* of all they surveyed.

At last they got to the glade, and gave three joyful cheers which frightened five great black beetles, at the foot of a tree, over on their backs, where they lay and kicked tremendously; and several glow-worms in a dark corner put out their

lights, and wriggled off with might and main. Then a great plaid shawl was spread upon the grass, because Aunt Fanny didn't want to catch cold and be doubled up with the rheumatism. She said somebody might make a door-knocker of her, like old Gruffanuff. Then they all sat down in a compact little circle, and the children crying out, " *We're all right,*" she began the story of

MASSA CHARLES AND THE SILVER DOLLAR.

A TRUE STORY.

One pleasant day in spring, many years ago, a lady was sitting on the piazza of a house which belonged to a plantation on the borders of the beautiful Ashley River.* A good-looking negro man, holding a pair of chickens, was walking up the noble avenue of oaks, and soon he stopped with a low bow before the lady.

* In South Carolina.

“Missis,” he said, “dese yer chicken a’n’t gwine for stay young no longer. I want for know ef missis lemme go for sell ’em in de city?”

“I’ll buy them, Jupiter,” said the lady.

But that would not do. Jupiter wanted to get a present with the money for his sweetheart; she had hinted to him that a head-handkerchief, or turban of all the colours of the rainbow, would suit her exactly, and he looked so disappointed that his kind mistress said, “Well, Jupiter, you may go; only be sure to come back by sunset.”

With a joyful “Tank you, missis,” he rushed down to the boat-house, and soon had a light and pretty skiff out in the stream. As he was rowing, he saw a gentleman beckoning to him from the next plantation, and, nearing the shore, he asked politely, “Want me, massa?”

“Yes; take me down to the city, and I’ll give you a quarter.”*

* Quarter of a dollar.

“Sartain, massa, wid pledjure,” said Jupiter. The gentleman got in and began to talk immediately, and Jupiter made himself very entertaining. Presently he said,—

“Massa, don’t you want for buy dem chicken? dey fuss-rate.”

“Well now, Jupiter,” said Massa Charles (for it was he), “my wife says I must never do the marketing. If you told me a leg of mutton was a turnip, I should believe you; but I will send you to Major Black, a friend of mine, who’ll buy them if they are really good.”

“Tank you, massa,” said Jupiter; and he rowed away like a good fellow.

“Sing us a song, Jupiter,” said Massa Charles. “Come; I like to hear them: mind, you must make it up yourself.”

“Oh, massa! how you ben ax me for sing?” he answered, pretending to be very bashful, and at the same time clearing his throat; then, in a fine,

clear voice, he broke out in a long-shore melody, keeping perfect time with the beat of his oars :—

“ Ole maum Dinah, she hab 'leben chillen,
Fol de rol de ri, oh, fol de rol de ray.
One he was a stevedore, an 'toder was a barber,
Fol de rol de ri, oh, fol de rol de ray.
Wid a head like a tin pan, a back like a crowbar,
Fol de rol de ri, oh, fol de rol de ray.
He done row dis boat so bad, boys, he couldn't
make it go far,
Fol de rol de ri, oh, fol de rol de ray.
And it's hurrah ! massa barber, wen did you get
to Charleston,
Fol de rol de ri, oh, fol de rol de ray.
And he row to de landin', wid tank you berry
much, sar,
Fol de rol de ri, oh, fol de rol de ray.”

The last two lines were sung as the boat touched the dock, with Jupiter bowing and grinning from ear to ear, as Massa Charles put the promised

quarter of a dollar in his hand and walked away, but first telling him where Major Black lived.

Then this good man,—about whom I could tell you a thousand stories, such as you have read in the first Nightcap books, of his kindness of heart and how everybody loved him,—this good man strolled along King Street, with his hands in his pockets, humming to himself all he could recollect of “Ole maum Dinah,” while Jupiter hastened to sell his chickens. He got a silver dollar* for them, and nearly wild with delight, set about buying the gorgeous cotton handkerchief which was to make Venus, his sweetheart, more beautiful in his eyes than her classical heathen namesake.

He walked along, looking into all the windows, and presently came to a little haberdasher’s shop in King Street, kept by two cross old women. They lived with a brother who was so much disliked that he rejoiced in the nickname of “Turkey-

* About four shillings English money.

Buzzard Skinflint.” If you want to show extreme disgust at any one in Charleston, you have only to call him a turkey-buzzard.

Jupiter went into the store, and, pulling at his forelock of wool,* pointed to a gorgeous handkerchief hanging over a string, and respectfully asked, —“Hou much you ask for dem, missis?”

“It’s a dollar!” said the oldest Miss Skinflint, charging about a third more than its value.

“He mighty harnsum; I ben take it, if you please, missis,” said Jupiter.

“I don’t believe you’ve got a dollar,” said the cross old thing;—“let’s see *that* first.”

“Why, missis, what for you tauk *so*? I got him dollar here;”—and he took the silver dollar out of his pocket, and held it slightly up between his thumb and finger.

The other sister had come out from behind the counter while he was speaking, and at the moment

* The way a negro makes a bow.

he held up the money she knocked his elbow. It *might* have been an accident, but, anyhow, the dollar flew out of Jupiter's hand and rolled under the counter in an instant.

"Oh, missis!" cried poor Jupiter with a face of great distress, "lemme get 'hind de counter an fine my dollar."

"*Your* dollar!" said the wicked woman. "Be off with you! you never had a cent!"

"Oh, missis, please, *do* don't tauk *so*! I loss um, true for true. I got him for some chicken, and you know he done gone under de counter."

"Get out of the store this minute," cried both the women in a fury, just as Turkey-Buzzard Skin-flint sauntered in.

"What are you about, you rascal?" he said, facing round on the poor fellow.

"Oh, massa, I 'clare it's my dollar. I loss 'em in de store."

But the wicked women said he was a thief come

there to steal, and told Turkey-Buzzard Skinflint to go at once and get Limpy Jonas, the constable, to take him to the guard-house.

At this very moment Massa Charles was walking that way; seeing quite a crowd collected, he pushed through to find out what it all meant. To his surprise the very first person he saw was his friend Jupiter, with great tears rolling down his cheeks, and his limbs trembling, and heard the cross old women telling everybody that he had entered the store with a cock-and-bull story about selling some chickens for a dollar, when he didn't have fourpence, and only came in to steal.

Massa Charles felt his anger rising; he would have given five dollars to have shaken the wicked woman's snapping false teeth out of her mouth, and thrown her wig over the house, but, controlling himself, he beckoned to Jupiter, and said, in a whisper,—“See here, take this dollar, and run for your life.” He held out a silver dollar as he

spoke, and with a look of deep gratitude the poor fellow put the money in his pocket, darted away at the top of his speed, and was round the corner just as old Turkey-Buzzard Skinflint and Limpy Jonas the constable came in sight.

Whew!! how mad they all were. They abused Massa Charles as much as they dared; but that was not much, for he quietly said,—“If you don’t take care I’ll have *you* up for robbery, for I’m pretty sure the negro told the exact truth:” and then he walked slowly away, with his hands in his pockets.

The next week Massa Charles was sitting at home with his daughter Laura on one knee and his little daughter Fanny* on the other, telling them for about the hundred and fiftieth time the wonderful tale of “Jack and the Dragon.” He had told just before the story of the “Old Porker who had seven little pigs,” because that had

* “Aunt Fanny” now.

always to come *first* if he expected any peace of mind. In the second he had just got to where Jack was killing the dragon, who had ninety-nine heads, all of which must be cut off before he would consent to die, when Prince John came in and said,—“Massa, dere’s a man, he say he name Jupiter, want for see you jes one leetle minute.”

“Jupiter!” repeated Massa Charles, thinking.

“Yes, massa. Eberybody want for anything come for plague *you*. I ’clare you oughtn’t to ’courage des yer fellows ; dey too imperent.”

“I want to go too,” said Laura.

“Me, too,” said Fanny.

So Massa Charles went out laughing, with a little monkey skipping on either side, and there at the door was the very black man whom he had saved out of the clutches of Turkey-Buzzard Skin-flint, his wicked sisters, and Limpy Jonas the constable.

“’Scuse me, massa,” said Jupiter, his black eyes

shining with eager gratitude,—“I don’t mean no disrespec; you berry kind to me. I tank you much, dear massa. I can’t do nothing ’cept gib you dis chicken; he berry nice one. Please take um, massa.”

His voice broke and trembled. He held out a beautiful white pullet as he spoke, and his intelligent face beamed with humble affection and respect.

“Why, Jupiter!” said Massa Charles, “I only did for you what was just and right. It would have been wicked in *me* not to have defended you.”

“God bless you, massa! When I tole some ’quaintances ’bout what you ben do for me, dey say, ‘I bet dat ar was Massa Charles! he so berry, *berry* kind to niggers;’ and so him was you, massa.”

“I want little white cheeken,” said Laura.

“I too,” said Fanny.

So Massa Charles, who had great delicacy of

feeling as well as goodness of heart, thanked Jupiter, and took the present he had brought. Bless your little hearts, it would have mortified and grieved the black man terribly if it had been refused, or if Massa Charles had offered to *pay* for it. No, he knew better than that; and he accepted it and thanked Jupiter, just the same as if he had been a friend on equal terms; and the black man went home perfectly happy.

“Oh, what a good, nice, black man!” cried the children, as Aunt Fanny finished; “and what a darling your father is! I wish he was our father.”

“He’ll be your grandfather, if you like; and you must consider it a very particular compliment, for he is a great favourite among his friends in New York. He is so good-natured, that it seems utterly impossible to get him angry, though *I* think his old cronies take great liberties with him.”

“Tell us some of the liberties,” Aunt Fanny.”

She thought a moment, then burst out laughing, and said,—“ I remember his telling me something funny that happened not long ago. He had gone to see some merchants who sell stockings in Duane Street, opposite the City Hospital.”

“ But we want to know their names,” said Peter.

The firm was called Viotor and Achilles ; and Massa Charles had, the day before, been poking fun at Mr. Achilles, asking him if it was his uncle Achilles who was such a terrible fellow for fighting at the siege of Troy,—the one who tied Hector, the king’s son, by the heels to his chariot-wheels and dragged him round the city.

“ Yes,” said Mr. Achilles, “ he was the very same.” Then he muttered to himself with a chuckle, “ I owe you one,”—by which he meant that he intended to poke fun at Massa Charles the very first chance he could get.

The next day, when the good man entered the store, he said, “ I am going up to buy several hun-

dred dozen of stockings. How is that wicked old uncle of yours that killed Hector?"

"Oh, he's all right," returned Mr. Achilles; and he went on reading and answering his letters, while Massa Charles and the clerks had a good time upstairs, cracking jokes and buying and selling the stockings.

Presently Massa Charles came slowly down the stairs, with his hands in his pockets. He was singing, in a rough, gruff voice, this elegant ditty:—

"I once spent a week with such a very nice old lady
Called Gra—dy,
And she gave me for breakfast marmalade,
Eggs, buttered toast, and cocoa,
And for tea To—ko!"*

"What!!" exclaimed Mr. Achilles, without taking his eyes off his writing,—“what!! Come back from England so soon?"

* By “toko” the old lady meant a flogging.

“ I haven’t been to England,” said Massa Charles advancing towards him.

“ O—h !” said Mr. Achilles, looking up, pretending to see who it was for the first time,—“ o—h ! *I thought it was Jenny Lind ;*” and all the clerks screamed out laughing, clapping their hands, and crying “ bravo ” and “ encore ” at Massa Charles, who sang so delightfully that he was mistaken for Jenny Lind, while Mr. Achilles was seized with a paroxysm of chuckles, and thumping the desk, cried out, “ Now, we’re even, old fellow ! We’re even !”*

The children enjoyed this joke very much, and then, as it was noon, and their appetites came as regularly as clock-work, they proceeded to set out the refreshments in elegant style on leaves ; after which Peter, making a low bow to Aunt Fanny, as if he was a butler, said, “ *Madame, est servi,*” which was French for “ Lunch is ready,”

* A true story.

while Fred cried out, "Fall to, gentlemen and ladies!"

If "falling to" meant eating, it was done to admiration. You may be sure all the nicest bits were offered to their guest, who declared she must buy a patent appetite if they expected her to finish half they gave her. After lunch the children dispersed to play games, and Aunt Fanny opened a book she had brought, and read an article called "Some Account of a Consulate."* The delicate wit and fine irony, with which it was filled to overflowing, charmed and amused her beyond measure. Then she shut up the delightful book, and began to build castles in the air. The favourite one of all was a monstrous great castle, which she stuffed just as full as it could hold of toys, books, baths, rice pudding, fresh milk, and rosy-cheeked apples. Then she started off in a carriage drawn by very swift horses, and rode about the poorest parts of

* By Donald G. Mitchell.

the great city of New York, and whenever she saw a poor little bit of a ragged miserable child, she would stop the carriage, jump out, seize the child, jump in, and order the coachman to drive for his life to the tremendous castle, where the poor little one, after being fed and washed, was to be tenderly brought up, and taught to be a good man or woman. She was very savage indeed about the starving helpless babies which wretched drunken parents *hire* to other drunken women, who stupify them with awful drugs, and then sit on steps begging, with the little wan white face of the baby turned up to excite compassion. Oh, those she would snatch away and run,—never mind how much the wicked woman screamed after her. Yes, those poor little victims should be nursed back to life and happiness with the tenderest care.

“Ah, me! when *will* that time come?” said Aunt Fanny to herself, with such a big sigh that it

blew a dead leaf on her shoulder up in the air. "Writing books for my darlings brings plenty of happiness, but precious little money. I wish some *publisher* of books would take me into partnership. *They* certainly *do* have the best of it, through some mysterious hocus-pocus; and yet if *we* didn't write, where would *they* be, I should like to know? I mean to have a serious talk with one of those rich old fellows in Broadway* the very first chance I get."

She sat so still, thinking, that four pretty little squirrels ventured to come and squat round her, munching up the crumbs, their tails standing up like feathers, with one eye on what they were eating and the other fixed upon her face. Then she smiled to herself, and thought of what Prince John had told her she would have to do when she went to school,—“It's no fun, little misses; wen you ben go for school, you hab to keep one eye on he

* The principal street in the city of New York.

book and 'toder on he schoolmisses de hole bressed time."

Pretty soon the children came racing back, scaring the squirrels into the trees; and then it was time to go home.

THE THIRD DAY IN THE WOOD.

"I RATHER like 'living wild like the Arabs,' as my friend Fred says," remarked Aunt Fanny the next day at breakfast; "so, my merry men and lasses, if you have no objection, I'll go into the woods with you every day I am here."

"Hurrah for our side!" exclaimed the boys.
"Talk about

 'Old King Cole being a jolly old soul ?
 Aunt Fanny's worth a dozen such as he ;

 For she can't bear a pipe,
 And she don't want a bowl,
And she makes us dance and sing without fiddlers three."

Just at this moment Something-Short, the snub-nosed dog, whose portrait you have in one of the other books, dashed into the room, chasing before

him a poor little brown hen, who dipped and straddled and tumbled up into all the corners, clucking and squawking fearfully. The boys caught the mischievous little animal, and helped the poor hen out of the window, who ran off, stumbling about with fright; and Something-Short had his ears well boxed.

"By the way," said Aunt Fanny, "I've got a chicken-story in my trunk. I wrote it for Kitty and Bob."

"Oh, the very thing to read in the woods," cried the children; "and chickens are so pretty! Do please get it."

So, laden with cakes and apples for bodily refreshment, and the chicken-story for a feast for the mind, the party tripped joyfully off, and before long were seated in the glade, all ears and attention, listening to the deeply interesting history of

FOUR LITTLE CHICKENS.

THE HISTORY OF
FOUR LITTLE CHICKENS.
IN FIVE PARTS.



PART I.

DID you ever go out at the back door to feed the chickens when you were in the country? I did, and, dear me! what fun it was to see them all clucking and scratching and clattering together! And when I threw out a handful of corn, how they did tumble head-over-heels over one another's backs, and very nearly bit their own noses off!—that is, if chickens *have* any noses. It wasn't very good manners, was it? but then, you see, they were only chickens, and didn't know any better. Of course not!

The four little chickens I am going to tell about, however, are not the ones I saw last year. They and their mother, the old hen, lived in a barn-yard belonging to a queer little tumble-down old woman, who lived in a queer little tumble-down old house, away down the lane. In the same yard were twenty-seven other hens, old and young; three big turkeys, with red ruffles under their chins, eight fat waddling ducks; one proud chanticleer, with a scarlet cocked hat on top of his head; and a shaggy brown dog, neither very big nor very little. The hens slept in the branches of the maple-tree; the turkeys in the boughs of the apple-tree; the ducks picked out a cool place near the big mud-puddle; the proud old cock kept house in a hay-loft all by himself; and the brown dog owned a wooden castle, which was painted such a bright green that it set your teeth on edge only to look at it. It had a round hole in front, by way of a door, so that when the brown dog lay down

inside, with his black snub-nose all over hair just peeping out, he looked as if his head had been put like a button into the door like a button-hole. As to the four little chickens and their mother, they had a nice soft nest of straw in a great hole at the bottom of the apple-tree, where they all cuddled up together as comfortable as you please.

But one unlucky day—oh dear! oh dear!—Cluck-cluck, the hen, went for a little walk on the road in front of the queer little tumble-down old woman's queer little tumble-down old cottage. She was hopping along very pleasantly, thinking of nothing particular, and picking up a fly, or a shiny insect, or a nice little fat worm, every now and then, when up came a waggon at a terrible rate, and before Cluck-cluck could get out of the way, the wheel passed over her breast and killed her! She had only just time to utter a parting squawk, which no doubt meant, "Oh, my dear chickens,

good-bye !” and she was quite dead. Poor old hen ! Aren’t you sorry ? I am.

In a few minutes the queer little tumble-down old woman came out of her queer little tumble-down old cottage, with a panful of nice corn to feed her poultry. As soon as they caught sight of the pan, up ran the twenty-seven hens, three big turkeys, the eight fat ducks, the proud rooster, and the four little chickens,—but no old hen.

“ Why, lackaday ! where can Cluck-cluck be ?” she cried. Just then she happened to look out on the road, and saw lying there what seemed to be a little heap of gray feathers. She looked again, and this time she knew it was her poor Cluck-cluck, as dead as a door-nail !

Up went her hands and eyes, and over her head went her big check-apron, and she began to cry, for she was very fond indeed of Cluck-cluck.

“ Oh, dear-a-deary me !” cried the queer little tumble-down old woman. “ Only look at my poor

old hen ! she must have been run over by some cruel man ! Such a nice lot of eggs as she used to give me ; and then those dear little chickens ! and now I shall have to boil her into noodle-soup !” And out toddled the queer little tumble-down old woman,—leaving her pan of corn on the ground,—picked up the body of poor Cluck-cluck by the legs, and went off into the house.

In the meantime the four little chickens stood meekly together in a row, on one leg apiece, not daring to come near the pan while those twenty-seven big hens and great gobbling turkeys and greedy ducks were stuffing themselves. Oh, how hungry they were ! and how they longed for their mother, who always made a place for them in spite of any one and every one. The corn was almost gone, and still the chickens dared not make a single hop nearer the pan, when all at once Yap, the brown dog, who had been looking on the whole time, bounced out of his kennel with a loud

bow-wough, bow-wough! and dashed head-first at the great greedy creatures. Away they all flew, screaming with fear; and then Yap, coming up to the poor little chickens, coaxed them, as well as he knew how, to come and have some breakfast.

You may fancy they obeyed him gladly enough, for with a joyful "Peep, peep!" that meant, "Thank you, Mr. Yap; oh, thank you very much!" they all hopped into the pan at once, and had a capital time,—Yap looking on with the deepest interest.

But when breakfast was over, they began to long for their mother again; and at last Yellowlegs, the eldest, cried out,—

"Peep, peep! It seems as if our mother had left us to take care of ourselves. Why don't she come home? Peep, peep!"

"Peep, peep! I'm afraid to stay here alone; those great turkeys look as cross as though they

meant to eat us up at a mouthful; peep, peep!" said Redcomb, the second.

"Peep, peep! Suppose we go and ask Uncle Chanticleer to help us? Peep, peep!" said Chickabiddy.

"Peep, peep! I'll tell you what to do!" exclaimed Cockspur, the smallest of the chickens, who as yet had not a single feather half-an-inch long. "Let's all run away and go to see the world. Peep, peep!"

"Peep, peep! Hold your tongue," cried Yellowlegs. "I'm the oldest, and ought to manage the family. I say, with sister Chickabiddy, that we had better pay a visit to Uncle Chanticleer, and perhaps he will be so pleased by our dutiful conduct that he will adopt us. He is very rich, too: he owns two dunghills, and has a house all to himself in the hay-loft. Peep, peep!"

The chickens opened their eyes at the idea of such immense wealth, and as they could not think

of any other plan, it was decided to call on Uncle Chanticleer right away, though Cockspur grumbled out to Redcomb,—“Peep, peep! the oldest indeed! She only came out of her shell two hours before I did! Peep, peep!”

“Peep, peep! Be respectful to your elders! peep, peep!” retorted Redcomb, giving him a knock with his bill, for he wanted to make out that he was the oldest himself.

“Peep, peep! I don’t see it; peep, peep!” chirped Cockspur, as he hopped away, with his down all in a fuzz of rage; and then the four set off for Uncle Chanticleer’s, who was no other than the proud Cock of the walk.

He looked so fierce, as he sat on top of the wall, sunning his feathers, in his red cocked hat, which he never took off, and his long spurs, that the poor chickens trembled in every limb; their heads went down and their tails went up, and they made Uncle Chanticleer a most particularly respectful bow, all

in a row, and in the greatest twitter you can imagine.

At first he took no notice of them, but went on shouting out a patriotic song, of which he was very fond, at the top of his voice. It was a song that he had composed himself, and commenced in this way—

“America’s the greatest nation
That exists in all creation ;
She takes the most exalted station,
And is bound to keep it *tew*,—*

With her cock-a-doodle doodle, and her cock-a-doodle *dew*-
oo-oo-oo-ooo !”

Here Uncle Chanticleer wound up with a prodigious flourish that almost knocked the little chickens off their legs with astonishment ; after which he condescended to cast his eyes on them in a royal way, and ask,—“Well, youngsters, what do you come here for ?”

* An uneducated New Englander pronounces the word “too” as if it were spelt “*tew*.”

The young ones nudged each other as much as to say, "You begin," "No, you," but were too frightened to speak; whereupon Uncle Chanticleer bristled up his feathers, waved his tail, gave his red cocked hat a vicious jerk, shook his spurs impatiently, and cried,—“There,—don’t keep me waiting; I’ve no time to attend to such small fry.”

“Peep, peep!”—so Yellowlegs began in a trembling voice. “Please, Uncle Chanticleer, our mother has gone off and left us, and we don’t know what is to become of us. Peep, peep!”

“Wait till Christmas, and you’ll find out what’s to become of you!” snapped Uncle Chanticleer, with a chuckle. He knew *he* was entirely too tough to be in any danger,—the cross old thing!

“Peep, peep! And please, Uncle Chanticleer,” went on Yellowlegs,—“as we were all alone, and so very little, we thought that maybe—you—might”—

“What do you mean by your impudence?” cried Uncle Chanticleer, flying into a passion, and lifting up his left leg so high that it disappeared in his feathers. “*I* have anything to do with you, indeed! you little miserable beggars! I’ll teach you to come after me again!” and with his feathers all on end with rage, and his red cocked hat looking redder than ever, he flew at the poor little chickens,—kicked them, beat them with his wings and beak, gave Redcomb a dreadful scratch over one eye with his sharp spurs, and drove them furiously away to the other side of the poultry-yard.

Poor little things! they stood all cuddled together in a corner; and if chickens can cry, I have no doubt that they nearly cried their eyes out.

At last Redcomb managed to say,—“Peep, peep! Suppose we go to that kind old dog who got us our breakfast, and ask him to help us. Peep, peep!”

“Peep, peep ! Oh, yes !” cried his brother and sisters ; so away they all went to Yap’s kennel, in a perfect chorus of peep, peeps.

The good fellow was taking a nap, with his head just out of the door ; so Redcomb, Cockspur, and Chickabiddy sat down in a small wooden tub beside the kennel, and Yellowlegs, whose little wings had just shot out their strong quill-feathers, fluttered up to the top of Yap’s house and sat there, looking down at his black snub-nose, waiting for him to wake up.

Presently Yap’s eyes lazily opened. “Why, my good little friends !” he exclaimed, in the animal language,—which all the birds and dogs and kittens and chickens understand,—“I am glad to see you again ! What has been the matter ? You look as if all your down had been rubbed the wrong way.”

On hearing him speak so kindly, the four chickens took courage. They all hopped under

his nose, and told him—every one talking at once—about how cruelly Uncle Chanticleer had treated them. Yap listened, with his big brown eyes full of tears.

“You poor little things!” he cried, when they were through. “How I *should* like to wring Uncle Chanticleer’s head off! But my mistress has chained me fast to my kennel, as a punishment for scaring the poultry this morning; and I don’t know when I shall get out again to help you. My advice is that you all run away and seek your fortune elsewhere.”

“PEEP, PEEP, n-a-a-h! I told you so!” cried Cockspur, ruffling up. “See how smart I am! PEEP, PEEP!”

“Peep, peep! We sha’n’t go because *you* told us. P-e-e-p, p-e-e-p!” retorted Redcomb, who thought he wanted snubbing.

The rest stood on one leg and said they would and they wouldn’t, and they could and they

couldn't, and they should and they shouldn't, and they mightn't, and then again perhaps they might, and then with great difficulty they scratched and fluttered themselves upon top of the fence to look round the world.

"Peep, peep!" reported Chickabiddy. "At any rate, I don't see a single proud chanticleer, or gobbling old turkey, or quacking old duck, out in the world. Let's go. Peep, peep!"

"Peep, peep! It *does* look pleasant," cried Yellowlegs, winking and blinking. "If we stay here, Uncle Chanticleer will always be worrying and hurrying and scurrying us; the three gobbling old turkeys will be wrangling and strangling and mangling and bangling us; the ducks will be dripping and nipping and stripping and whipping us; and we shall be falling and sprawling and crawling and bawling the whole time. So I say, go! Peep, peep!"

Then the four little chickens hopped in turn on

top of Yap's head, to bid him good-bye, and having no troublesome clothes to pack up, gave one glance at the queer little tumble-down old cottage, in the window of which the queer little tumble-down old woman was sitting, knit, knit, knitting, and joyously skipping through the palings of the gate, found themselves out on the highway.

For a while they kept together, pleasantly picking up a little insect, or stopping to scratch for a worm, when all at once they spied a cloud of dust from which issued scrambling, rambling, jolting, bustling sounds.

These came nearer; the cloud lifted, and a great confused flock of sheep appeared, driven by three men and a large sheep-dog, and completely filling the road. Frightened nearly to death, the little chickens started to run, and ran so fast and so far without looking right or left,—half flying, half hopping, fluttering, running, winking; slipping into all the holes and ruts, skipping out again,

flapping their little bits of wings, and all but rolling head-over-heels,—that, when they *did* stop a moment to take breath, each one found itself separated from the other three, and left to seek its fortune all alone in the wide, wide world. Ah me! oh dear! and this is the end of the First Part.

PART II.

YELLOWLEGS' STORY.

"OH, Kitty!" cried Frank Marshall, "do come out here and see what I have for you!—something real pretty! Make haste now, or it will get away."

"Get away! then it is something alive?" and Kitty scampered out of the dining-room, and rushed up to her brother, eagerly exclaiming, "Oh, what is it? Do let me see!"

Frank seemed to be holding something very carefully in both his hands; and he now put this something into Kitty's, saying, "Hold fast all I give you." Kitty eagerly looked in her hand, and there was a pretty little downy white chicken with yellow legs.

"Oh, you sweet little darling!" she cried.
"Why, Frank, where did it come from?"

"I found it on the road," answered her brother;
"so I thought, as it seemed to be astray, you might as well keep it for a pet. Don't love it too hard,—that's all."

"Oh, no; I'll be just as kind to it as anything!" said Kitty; and away she ran to show her prize to baby-sister Lucy.

Poor Yellowlegs was not accustomed to being handled in this fashion, and cried "peep, peep" most piteously all the way; but Kitty held her tight, and in her delight and affection nearly smothered her with kisses.

"Look, Lucy!" she cried; "only see my little chicken!"

"Oh, how pletty! how pletty!" lisped Lucy, and she toddled up to her sister.

"Me want to have her in me's hand."

“No, no; I must keep her. I’m afraid you’ll hurt her, Lucy.”

“No, me wont!” cried the little thing, impatiently; “div Lucy tat ’ittle sicken, Kitty!”

“No, you can’t have it,” retorted Kitty; “it’s my own pet chicken, and I mean to keep it.”

Lucy made a snatch at the chicken, Kitty resisted her, and, between the two, poor Yellow-legs was nearly strangled, when fortunately the nurse interfered, and made Kitty give it up to her younger sister. Then Lucy took the little thing in her hand, squeezing it closely in her fear lest it should escape, and smoothing its down with her other hand,—Kitty watching her like a cat.

“Poor little darling! it keeps crying ‘peep, peep’ all the time!” exclaimed she at length.

“What can be the matter? Oh, I know,—it wants something to eat. What shall I get it, nurse,—bread and milk?”

But nurse was busy and did not hear her; so

Kitty ran off, and presently came back with a large saucer in which was a pile of bread wetted with milk, enough to have fed a whole brood of chickens, all of which I suppose she expected to cram down the throat of her unlucky pet, which had already gone through so much at her hands, out of pure kindness and desire to make it happy.

When she returned she found Lucy sitting on the floor, with Yellowlegs held fast between her little knees, while she was trying to tie a narrow red ribbon round her throat! The poor chicken was crying "peep, peep" with all her little strength, for how could she tell that all these tortures were inflicted upon her in love? She only knew that her tender body was being squeezed up, and a cruel tight string twisted about her little downy neck, while her feeble cry for help seemed to be unheard.

But Kitty and Lucy were delighted with their

chicken's appearance in the red ribbon ; and when it was on, Kitty, sitting down close beside her sister, spread out some of the bread on her hand, crying, " Here, chicky darling, eat your dinner now ! "

Of course poor Yellowlegs didn't feel much like eating,—she only kept up her pitiful plaint of " peep, peep ! " her little bright black eyes looking vainly round for some way of escape. The children could not understand why she did not mind them : " Maybe she's too young to feed herself," said Kitty, at last,— " poor little darling ! Lucy, you hold her bill open and I'll give her some bread. Perhaps she will like it better that way."

But this plan did not succeed any more than the other. Kitty could drop a little bit of bread into poor struggling chicky's mouth, but the next instant out would come the " peep, peep ! " and out came the bread, too, much to Lucy's anger. " S'e's a bad naughty sicken ! " she cried ; " s'e won't eat her

bled!"* Let's mate her doh to bed in ler day-time, Kitty, tause s'e's so bad."

"Oh, no! she isn't naughty!" said Kitty; "but I'll make her a bed in this basket, and maybe when she sees it she *will* like to take a nap;" and as she spoke she took out of her own drawer a pretty little Indian work-basket, tossing out all her spools, scissors, and needles, in the wildest confusion. Then diving into another drawer, she drew out some cotton wadding, and lined the basket with it just as soft and nice as could be, her pretty face all aglow with happiness and tender affection for Yellowlegs.

Then she brought the chicken's bed to Lucy, and Lucy put Yellowlegs in; the cover was partly closed, and the basket put in a dark corner, "so the light shouldn't hurt her dear little eyes."

Poor Yellowlegs! she lay in her novel bed too much worn out to stir, her little heart beating, her

* Bread.

very bones aching with fright and fatigue and all the squeezing she had got. Oh, how she wished she had never left the queer little tumble-down old woman's yard! Even Uncle Chanticleer wouldn't have beaten her if she had kept out of his way; and now these great cruel human beings seemed determined to worry the life out of her. "Oh, if they only would let me alone!" she thought,— "or if I could only get out of this dreadful place!"

After a while, seeing that no one came to trouble her, Yellowlegs ventured to put her little head out of the basket and look around the room. The children were busy with their dolls by this time, whilst their dear chicken was taking its nap, as they supposed, and did not notice her. Nurse was busy with her sewing; and feeling that now or never was her chance of escaping, Yellowlegs hopped out of her basket, and began cautiously creeping towards what looked to her like a great

hole in the wall—in reality the open doorway. Alas ! she had not gone half across the room, when, with a loud cry of “ Oh, there’s our chicken going to run away ! ” Kitty sprang to her feet and darted at her.

In her fright and terror Yellowlegs ran past the door ; Kitty slammed it to ; Lucy scrambled up and joined the chase from the other side ; Yellowlegs darted under chairs, ran to and fro faster than ever she had done before,—the children after her laughing and screaming,—the chicken crying “ peep, peep ! ” in one incessant stream of sounds, when all at once the door flew open, their brother Frank entered, and with him a large hunting-dog, which had been taught to bring birds to his master that had been shot. The instant he caught sight of Yellowlegs, he concluded that here was some game in a new place ; he darted at her with one lightning-like bound, and before his master could call him off he had caught the poor little chicken by

the neck and ended all her joys and sorrows in an instant!

The children fairly screamed with distress when they saw Ponto walk gravely up to Frank with their pet chicken in his mouth, and drop it at his feet. Kitty flew at the dog and began beating him with her little fists, crying out, "Oh, Ponto, Ponto! you bad, wicked dog! how *could* you kill my dear, dear chicken?"

"It was not Ponto's fault, Kitty," said her brother, gravely. "Why didn't you take the poor little thing out to the poultry-yard and let it run about there, instead of bringing it up here to torment it?"

"We didn't torment it!" sobbed Kitty, half angrily. "We gave it bread and milk, and made it a bed, and tied a red ribbon round its neck, and—oh! oh!"

Frank could hardly help a smile, although he still looked grieved. "Well," he said, "I dare

say you meant it all in kindness ; but if you do not allow a chicken or a mouse, or a human being, to be happy in its or his *own way*, you only give pain and torment. Don't you remember, last winter, when you insisted on the cat's walking on two legs how she bit you ? *She* preferred four legs to two. And you know your white mouse had to be given away to cousin Kate because you plagued it so. And now this poor little chicken is dead, when it might have been so happy out in the poultry-yard, all because you did not love it in the *right way*."

Ah me ! oh dear ! And here is the sorrowful end of Yellowlegs and the Second Part.

PART III.

REDCOMB'S STORY.

MEANWHILE, Redcomb had found his way to the poultry-yard of a gentleman's place, not very far from the cottage of the queer little tumble-down old woman. A perfect crowd of fowls were clucking and scratching behind the tall green palings, with dozens of little chickens among them,—some no larger than Redcomb himself. Plenty of corn lay scattered on the ground, and everything looked so nice that the little creature took courage, squeezed himself between the palings, and stood timidly by the fence, not daring to come any nearer.

At first none of the fowls took any notice of him ; so Redcomb plucked up a spirit, and hop-

ping near one of the smallest chickens, said, —“Peep, peep! Good morning, miss. Peep, peep!”

The chicken looked at him a minute out of one side of her head, and then cluttered off to her mother to tell the news.

Up bustled the old hen, in high feather at a stranger's daring to address her daughter, and began scolding away at Redcomb in some strange language that he didn't comprehend one word of. He tried to beg pardon,—she screamed louder yet, and at the same moment ever so many others bustled up, cluck-clucking together like so many clappers in a mill.

The fact was, they were all very genteel foreigners, from Russia, Poland, and even China; so when Redcomb only asked them, in the meekest way, with a scratch of the left leg, to let him live with them, and pick up a few grains of corn, they thought he was saying something impertinent.

They flew at him, they bit him, they pushed him about, and made all sorts of fun of him. "I wish the cat would eat you!" cried one. "What did you come here for? nobody wants you!" squalled another. "You're a pretty chap!" snapped a third, giving him a cuff; and an old cock-turkey, who fancied himself as good as an emperor at the very least, puffed himself up like a balloon, and blustered till his head grew completely red,— "Turn him out! pluck him! turn him out!" till the poor little thing was quite bewildered, and did not know whether he was on his toes or his head.

At last they were diverted by the poultry girl's coming to feed them, or Redcomb would certainly have been killed. He stood there lonely and forlorn, the tears coming into his eyes, all his down rumped the wrong way, and his poor little tail drooping in a despairing fashion, when a good old Yankee duck, who had been looking on for some time, called him to her in a kind voice. She would

have been glad to run to his assistance, but she was sitting on her eggs, and dared not leave them lest they should grow cold; for you must know if that had happened, the little ducklings inside would never have come to life.

“Quack, quack!” she said, good-naturedly; “come here to me, you poor little thing! If nobody else will speak to you, you shall be my child; and when the ducklings come out, as I expect they soon will, you can live with us just the same; and then we’ll go to the pond and catch tadpoles,—that’s such fun!”

Poor Redcomb hardly knew what “the pond” meant, and he had not heard before of the delights of catching tadpoles; however, he hopped, with a grateful “peep, peep” under the warm breast of the kind old duck, and snuggled down to take a nap as comfortable as you please.

When daddy drake came to see his wife, with a nice little titbit for her supper, she told him all

about the cruelty of the others to Redcomb, and how she had adopted him into the family.

“Quack, quack!” said daddy drake; “let me look at him. *I’ll* tell you whether he is good for anything or not. Quack, quack!”

So Redcomb was told to get up out of the nest and make his manners. He stood on one leg, which is considered very elegant, while daddy drake twirled him round and round, opened his bill, and looked as far as possible down his throat, stared at his feathers, and poked at his toes. Then the old gentleman cleared his throat, and remarked, with a very important air, “Quack, quack! My dear, this little party looks to me like one of those dirty birds called chickens, who, because their toes are sharp, and not fastened together with a beautiful skin like ours, make it an excuse for never washing themselves. I really think he will not be fit company for our little family. Evil

communications, you know, corrupt good manners. Quack, quack !”

“Quack, quack ! Oh, never mind his toes. You and I can teach him to swim. Don’t be so grumpy. Quack, quack !”

“Quack, quack ! My dear, I am only prudent,” answered daddy drake, in a meek voice ; for he was awfully afraid of his wife, who would just as lief come waddling at him and punch his sides sore as not, if he should chance to displease her. So the long and the short of the matter was, that daddy drake carried little Redcomb off then and there, to find him something to eat,—pretending all at once to be delighted with the plan.

He led the way to the pond, which spread out its calm surface dotted here and there with lily leaves, among which the fragrant white flowers lay resting. He looked first with one eye, and then the other, all along the oozy edge of the bank. “Quack, quack !” he cried, “here’s a delicious

morsel!" and he pounced upon a little speck of a frog about as big as a five-cent piece,* and offered it with a benevolent air to Redcomb.

"Please—I thank you very much," faltered the poor chicken, "but, but, I'd *rather* have some corn."

"Oh, well, just as you please," said daddy drake, and he ate it up himself at a mouthful, then waddled off to the barn-yard, followed closely by Redcomb. The saucy foreign birds made way for them without a word, for daddy drake, though a terrible coward at home, was a very savage fellow everywhere else, to make up for his wife's snubbing; and so the foreign people turned up their noses under their wings at the little stranger, but did not dare to abuse him.

When night came, daddy drake let Redcomb cuddle up between his wife and himself, and was as amiable, she said, "as a basket of chips." This

* The size of a silver threepence.

was a very sensible compliment, let me tell you, for what can be more innocent and amiable than chips, if you don't set fire to them? Quarrelling and strife destroy happiness, as fire destroys chips. So, you see, Mrs. Duck knew a thing or two.

Just before morning, daddy drake awoke and mildly remarked, "Quack, quack! Wife, I don't exactly see how we are to manage this little chap; we shall never make a drake of him in this world. Why, yesterday afternoon he wouldn't eat a little frog as plump as a pigeon! Q-u-a-c-k, q-u-a-c-k!" and daddy drake stood up, spread his legs wide apart, and glared at his wife in perfect astonishment at Redcomb's want of taste.

"Oh, quack, quack, don't you be in such a hurry! just wait till my eggs are hatched, and you'll see how nicely I shall make him go with the others. Quack, quack!" So saying, mother duck tucked her head under her wing for one last short nap, and daddy drake, seeing that she was not in

the humour for talking, did the same ; but what they dreamed about I'm sure I can't say.

In two weeks more, as mother duck sat watching Redcomb, who was kicking up a dust near by, the egg-shells went " crack, crack !" and out popped one little yellow head from beneath her breast, and out popped another, and another, until eight lovely ducklings had popped out. There were nine eggs, to be sure, but one was a nest-egg, and a humbug. " Quack, quack ! you'll never come to anything," said mother duck, and she kicked it right out of the nest with the broken egg-shells. " Let me see : one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight ; yes, that's all right ! Oh, how pretty you are, you dear little yellow things ! twice as lovely as your foster-brother there. Turn your toes in, you darlings, and let me see you walk all in a row, as ducklings ought to do. Now, wink and blink, straddle and waddle prettily ; take care ! don't flutter or sputter ; waddle nicely."

“Tak, tak!” said the wee ducklings,—which you know is baby-talk for “quack, quack.” Then they ranged themselves in a straight line, and Redcomb hurried up to put himself with them, but the ducklings pushed him away.

“Tak, tak!” they cried, “you are not one of us. Where’s your flat bill and broad feet? Go away! Tak, tak!”

“Fie, for shame!” cried mother duck. “He is not as pretty as you; indeed, he is not a duckling at all; but you must not despise him for that, you must pity him. Let him walk with you now, and follow me to the pond: I am going to give you a lesson in swimming. Quack, quack!”

She put herself at the head of the company, and waddled off, her brood following, giving discontented looks at poor Redcomb, who did wish he might march alongside of mother duck, whom he loved dearly; but since she had got her own little family she hardly looked at him, only treating him

with a cool, condescending sort of kindness, as much as to say,—“There, poor thing! nobody shall gobble you up, but of course you can’t expect to be noticed like *MY* beautiful children! Oh dear, no! not by no means!” What bad grammar mother duck talked! didn’t she?

On their way to the pond, they met a select party of chickens and turkeys taking a walk. They were led by a tremendous old fellow, who had set himself up as king of the yard. Somebody had tied a bit of red flannel rag round his left leg, and this he thought a most superb decoration—equal to a diamond collar at the very least, or the order of the garter.

“Gobble, gobble, gobble!” he said, in a pompous tone. “Well, Madam Duck, so you have got your little family at last, have you? And a very nice party they are, too! their yellow is really the prettiest shade we have had this season. Have you observed this elegant red ornament on my leg?

I flatter myself that it's quite stunning ! matches my shirt-frill so beautifully. But gobble, gobble, gobble ! who is that ragged, wretched, little scarecrow ? He's not quite out of down, or quite into feathers ; and I must remark that I never saw such a long-legged, bare-necked, scraggy, shivering, dodging, peeping little fright before in the whole course of my existence !”

“ Oh, he is a foundling I picked up,” answered good mother duck. “ I hope you'll excuse him. He's not very pretty, I confess ; but just wait till he gets his comb, and his tail-feathers grow, for I am told that in time he will look very much like my Lord Ruckatucktiouski there.”

On this, Lord Ruckatucktiouski, who was a great Polish cock, with a magnificent top-knot, and tail of glossy jet-black feathers, strutted up to mother duck, with a very haughty air, saying,—
“ Don't make impertinent comparisons, I beg, ma'am ! Why, he's nothing but a little contempt-

ible Yankee chicken. I don't believe he knows who his grandfather is, even if he ever had any, which is very doubtful. Like *me*, indeed! You might as well say I resembled that miserable old Chanticleer yonder, to whom I have just given a good trouncing."

At the name "Chanticleer," Redcomb looked timidly round, and there, would you believe it? standing behind the Polish lord was Uncle Chanticleer himself! with nearly all of his long tail-feathers pulled out, his red cocked hat torn and flapping miserably over one eye, his head drooping, and lame of the left leg. All his pluck had gone with his beauty; and ashamed to return in this wretched plight to his family, he was limping round in a desperate state of melancholy. He had dared to venture to make a call upon one of Lord Ruckatucktiruski's wives, and the splendid bird was so furious at his impudence that he challenged him to fight. Uncle Chan-

ticleer, who was for ever boasting of his courage, could not refuse, and the Polander had whipped him terribly, and kept him in a tremor ever since.

When Redcomb saw his old tyrant in this woful condition, he could not help giving a joyful “peep;” and hopping up to Uncle Chanticleer, with a most uncharitable sneer on his face, he cried, “Peep, peep! how are *you*, Uncle Chanticleer? I fancy you would be glad to have *me* adopt *you*,—wouldn’t you? I feel *so* sorry for you! oh, to be sure I do, and no mistake!” and he hopped all round him flapping his wings, kicking up his ridiculous little spurs, and crying “peep, peep” so loudly that it sounded quite like a crow.

“Good for you, little one!” cried the Polander; “you’ll be cock of the walk before your grandmother, if you keep on trying;” and the great lord actually gave Redcomb an approving tap on the head with his beak, while Uncle Chanticleer, too

much ashamed to utter a word, sneaked off and hid himself under a barrel.

Mother duck was highly delighted at all this. Since other people had taken to praising Red-comb, she began to think him no small chicken of a bird. The little ducklings, however, turned quite green with envy, and felt very much relieved when mother duck, with a graceful waddle, bid the other party good morning; and crying to her children,—“Quack, quack! come along, my dears; turn in your toes as I do. Ah! there’s the pond. Now we’ll have a nice swim.”

On hearing this delightful news, all the little ones clattered, helter-skelter, racing and jolting and scrambling and pushing, each one trying to get first to the water,—all but poor little Red-comb! The very thought of swimming put him in a shiver. But old mother duck never dreamed of such a thing. She led them to the very edge of the pond, then turning round, she said,—“Now,

I'm going to jump in; when I say 'one, two, quack!' all of you follow me at once. Now,"—she took a long breath,—“one, two, QUACK!” and in tumbled the ducklings, pell-mell, so glad to get there they did not know what to do. The water closed over them for a minute, then their little heads popped up again, and they swam round and round in a perfect frolic.

Meanwhile poor Redcomb stood shaking on the bank. He had gone down to the water's edge with the rest, but the moment the cold drops touched his toes he drew back again, just as you do at the sea-shore, when you stand on the sand in your bathing-dresses, letting the waves just run over your curled-up toes, and not daring to dash in like good fellows, and see how splendid it is after you are once fairly started. Only Redcomb seemed to know by instinct that the pond was no place for him; and you don't know anything of the sort.

Presently the old duck turned round and saw him standing there. "Quack, quack!" she cried, "don't stand there looking like a booby! Hop right in, and paddle about with the others."

Redcomb stuck out one toe again and pulled it back in a hurry. In vain he tried to think that it was all right; and mother duck, getting impatient, swam and floated close to the shore. "Quack, quack! don't be so afraid," she said; "see how nicely your brothers and sisters behave! Really, there is nothing so delightful as swimming about and turning somersets. Only see me!"—and she stood on her head in the water and looked at him with her toes. "Come," she continued, popping her head up, "come, I'll teach you how to do that: one, two, and in you go."

"Oh, peep, peep, p-e-e-p!" cried Redcomb, in the greatest distress. "Oh, please, Mrs. Duck, I can't swim! I wasn't *made* to swim! Ask the hens in the yard: they will tell you that chickens

never go in the water ! *Do* ask them, oh, p-e-e-p, p-e-e-p !”

All this time the old duck was pushing and dragging Redcomb with all her force into the water. He struggled and kicked with might and main, but she was too strong for him. She made him hop up on a stone that stood just in the water, and crying “Now! make ready! take aim! QUACK!” she gave him a tremendous push with her beak, and in he tumbled, head-over-heels.

The poor little chicken splashed and dashed about desperately, his open, gasping mouth just above the surface, while mother duck paddled by his side to encourage him.

“Don’t make such a ridiculous row,” she said. “Strike out regularly with your feet : one, two,—one, two !”

Redcomb hardly heard her. His strength was nearly gone ; his life was fast ebbing away. Gasp-

ing, choking, struggling,—loving thoughts passed swiftly through his brain of his dear little sisters and brother whom he should never see again; but he hoped they would never come to a suffering pitiful end like his. With a few last feeble efforts he got his head above the water, and turning his little black eye upon the old mother duck, he faintly gasped out,—“Peep, peep! good-bye, dear friend; I know you *meant* to be kind,” and sank down. The little curling wavelets closed gently over him, and poor Redcomb was drowned.

With loud cries of surprise, the ducklings swam up to the spot. They had been watching the whole affair, and were wondering at Redcomb’s obstinacy.

“Tak, tak! what’s the matter, mamma?” they asked. “What has become of the little white thing?”

“Quack, quack! I’m sure I don’t know,”

answered mother duck. All her feathers were up in a hump with anxiety, and she began to think she had done wrong after all in forcing Redcomb into the water. She dived down below, and presently came up supporting with her broad bill the body of the poor little chicken.

“Quack, quack! children,” she cried. “Oh, me! oh, my! the poor little thing is dead! he knew better than I! he was never intended to go in the water. Oh, q-u-a-c-k!”

“Tak, tak! we are sorry too!” said the ducklings, who after all were not ill-natured. “Poor Redcomb! let’s help take him to the bank and bury him. We know a real nice place; tak, tak!”

They closed round the body in a circle, and supported it on their backs, while they swam towards a dark corner of the bank, where some great burdock-leaves flourished. Old mother duck swam in front, and looked the very picture

of grief. She sniffed and snuffed, and I have no doubt her tears quite salted the water in the pond.

On the way they met daddy drake, who was talking politics with a party of friends. "Quack, quack! *I* told you so," he said,—"*I* knew you would never make a drake of him. What a pity! Quack, quack!"

But it was no use to regret it now,—and so mother duck told him, with a spiteful snap of her bill. The ducklings carried the body of their adopted brother to the shore, and laid him under a great thick burdock-leaf. Then they all rushed into the water again, wagging their tails, as little dogs do, for joy, and I am very sorry to have to relate, that, from that moment to this, not one of them ever thought the first atom about poor Redcomb any more!

Ah dear! oh dear! And this is the sorrowful end of the Third Part.

Here Aunt Fanny paused and looked up. Kitty's lip was trembling with grief for the sad fate of poor little Redcomb, and Bob was winking as fast as possible, and seemed to be swallowing small stones, but he was only trying very hard to keep from crying. Then Aunt Fanny put her hands out and drew them both to her, and kissed them, and said, "Tender little good hearts! so sorry for the chickens! I am sorry too. There, run off and play Puss in the Corner, and we'll hear what happened to the others to-morrow."

So the children brightened up a little,—then more,—and soon they were racing and rushing in and out among the trees, as happy as princes, oh, dear me, yes! a great deal happier! until they suddenly discovered that they were tremendously hungry; and all made in a body for the little glade, and ate up every atom of their apples and cakes. Then more frolicking, and home with the sunset.

THE FOURTH DAY IN THE WOOD.

“BEFORE we go to the wood to-day, I want to inquire at the post-office for letters,” said Aunt Fanny. “Besides, I am curious to see your friend, Mrs. Marble. Let’s all make her a visit.”

This was a delightful proposal. The party started in high glee, and were soon at the little grocer’s shop, astonishing the old lady behind the counter by rushing suddenly in, crying all together, “Here’s Aunt Fanny come to see you, Mrs. Marble! Pull down your spectacles and shake hands with her.”

The old lady obeyed with great ceremony and politeness, apologising for not having her other cap on; and Aunt Fanny, with still greater politeness, inquired after her health, and how her good son Gam was, and then asked for her letters; upon

which Mrs. Marble looked and found two, and handing them out, whispered to Fred, "Look here, young leather-cap, your Aunt Fanny is no great shakes of a beauty, and there a'n't much of her; but I like her, I do;" which assurance tickled Fred very much.

"Why," said Aunt Fanny, in a tone of surprise, "here is a letter from California! Who can be writing to me? Oh, it is from a publisher who wants me to write a series of books for him, and says he will give me just what I choose to ask. Isn't that nice?"

"It's jolly!" said Peter. "He's the noblest Roman of them all! What do you mean to tell him, Aunt Fanny?"

"What would *you* do, Fred?"

"Why, I tell you what: *I* would write for everybody that asked me, and the one that treated me best, I would stick to."

"Ah, Mr. Fred, you are as wise as Mr. Dick in

David Copperfield, and I shall take your advice. If the children only keep on loving me, I shall be satisfied."

"Look here," said the old lady, shaking her knitting-needle at Fred,—“if they all love you as roughly as young Fire-engine there, I don't wonder you're so peaked and pale."

"Oh, but these little gentle darlings make it up on the other side,"—and an eyebeam was shot out at Sophie, Kitty, and Lou, which brought three tender hugs and three soft kisses on Aunt Fanny's pale cheeks; and then, bidding Mrs. Marble good-bye, the happy party went off to their sweet woodland retreat, where they were soon deeply absorbed in listening to the Fourth Part of the delightful chicken history,—which proceeded as follows.

PART IV.

CHICKABIDDY'S STORY.

I NEED not ask any of *you* (continued Aunt Fanny) whether you like to frolic in the woods ! You have picked chetsnuts, and chased chipmonks,* and run away from big spiders, and found winter-green berries, and little turtles, and stuffed anything and everything into your mouths, quite regardless of whether it was poison or not, many a time ! Then there is sliding down steep places, covered with pine-trash,† in the woods ! only you must be careful whether you slide on your dear little faces or not, for I have known pine

* Little American squirrels.

† The dead pine-leaves are called pine-trash.

“needles” to get up one’s nose and tickle dreadfully.

All this is famous fun for you, but for a little chicken?—Let us see what Chickabiddy thought about it.

In her terror of the sheep, on the morning when she and her brothers and sisters ran away, she squeezed through a fence by the side of the road, and found herself in a thick coppice. The underbrush was so close that only a little chicken could have got through it; but Chickabiddy worked her way along, tumbling over stones, catching her feathers in sharp thorns, flapping head-over-heels into deep mud-puddles, where she was almost drowned before she could get out, and peeping piteously.

A few berries were all she could find to eat, except once, when, by making a great effort, she caught a large grasshopper who bounced across her nose; but he turned out a perfect crab of a

grasshopper, all legs and shell, and nothing inside.

At last, when she had almost made up her mind to lie down and die, the wood became thinner, the bushes less dense, and all at once she came out on a piece of cleared ground, with a nice little one-storeyed cottage standing in the middle..

At the door of the cottage sat the dearest old woman you ever saw, busy knitting a stocking, and close beside her a pretty little girl was hard at work sewing shirt-buttons on some bright-coloured tinsel cards, for which she was paid a penny for six cards.

They both looked so kind that Chickabiddy walked right up to them, and looked in their faces with a questioning "peep, peep," as much as to say, "I'm lost,—please take care of me."

The little girl started up and clapped her hands for joy. "Oh, grandma!" she cried, "only see that dear little chicken! she must be lost! Mayn't

I keep her for a pet? - I *do* love little chickens so much !”

“ Yes, dear child,” said the good old woman ; “ you have never had a pet, and now this one seems to have been sent on purpose for you. Take it in the house and give it some corn. Little chickens ought to be well fed, you know,—and as this one has lost its mother so early, you must be a mother to it.”

“ Ah, that I will,” cried the affectionate little girl ; and she caught her chicken very gently in her hand and ran off into the house.

In a very few days Chickabiddy and Susy were the best friends in the world. Susy taught her to stand on the table at meal-times, and eat out of a little china plate, with “ For a good girl ” painted on it ; and at night Chickabiddy always slept in a paper box filled with fresh sweet clover, which was placed on a bench beside the bed of her little mistress. Susy loved her more and more every day,

and in her evening play-hours wanted no better playmate than her dear chicken. If she could have written poetry, I think she would have expressed herself something like this :—

A PIECE OF POETRY TO MY CHICKEN.

- “ Of all the little chickens that ever did live,
My chicken's the sweetest, I really believe ;
Her feathers are glossy and white as can be,
And, oh, she's my own little Chick-a-bid-dee !
- “ She perks up her head with the sauciest air,
As though to say, ‘ Catch me, Miss Sue, if you dare !’
But if I turn round and pretend not to see,
Hop ! she's up in my lap, little Chick-a-bid-dee
- “ She chants her ‘ peep, peep,’ like a queer little song,
And keeps it up busily all the day long ;
Then, as soon as it's dark, in her warm nest by me,
She goes fast to sleep—little Chick-a-bid-dee !
- “ Then out in the garden at dawning of day,
For ants and black beetles she's scratching away :

But the moment I call, it is funny to see
How she runs to be fed—little Chick-a-bid-dee !

“ I wish she would ne’er be a sober old hen,—
I’m afraid she won’t know me, or care for me then ;
But of this much I’m sure, that *her* chickies will be
’Most as sweet as my darling—my Chick-a-bid-dee !”

So Chickabiddy grew fat and happy, and Susy and her grandmother knitted stockings and sewed buttons, and they all three got along as nice as ninepence, when one unlucky day poor old grandma tumbled down and broke her arm ! She fainted away with the pain ; and little Susy, frightened nearly to death, had to hold her in her arms, and help her on the bed after she came to ; and then it was plain a doctor must be brought.

But doctors are not to be had for nothing, and the poor old woman had no money to pay for one. What should they do ? Susy thought and thought till her head nearly cracked, when

all at once she spied Chickabiddy peeping in at the door.

Quickly it came into her head,—“Perhaps if I offer the doctor in the village my chicken, he will cure poor grandma in return. Yes! I will ask him this very day: so dear chicky, you must go;” and, with the tears in her eyes, yet without a minute’s hesitation, the dear little girl ran up to her grandmother, and, throwing her arms round her neck, whispered,—“I must leave you a little while, dear grandma; but when I come back, perhaps I shall bring Doctor Mason with me.”

“Bless the child!” exclaimed the old woman, “where can we get the money to pay a doctor?”

“Oh, I know a way,” replied Susy, smiling bravely through her tears. Only let me go a little while, grandma, and you shall see what a fairy I will be.”

“Well, run along then,” replied her grand-

mother, stroking her cheek ; “ God will keep you safe, and perhaps send us a friend.”

Susy kissed her, and then quickly putting on her little faded sun-bonnet, and taking the small basket in which she carried home her buttons, she ran out of the house.

Chickabiddy came scampering up to her, as usual, expecting to be fed, but Susy caught her gently in her hand, and quickly popped her in the basket. Chickabiddy kicked and clucked away at a great rate, but her little mistress only tapped on the cover of the basket, and said, “ No, no, dear chicky, don’t try to get out ; you are to be sold, and I must not even look at you again ;” and choking back her tears she hurried away as fast as her little feet would carry her.

And now see the dear little girl hastening along the wood-path, with her basket on her arm. The bright sunshine flickered down through the leaves, and rested lovingly on her head ; the little birds

flew close beside her, or hopped fearlessly at her feet; all seemed to know and love the good and dutiful child, whom God's holy angels also looked on and blessed.



LITTLE SUSY.

At the door of Doctor Mason's pretty house, in the wide village street, stood the stout and good-natured housekeeper, looking carelessly

around her. Her fat comfortable cat sat at her feet, purring away, without a single kitten or care on her mind ; so of course she was very good-natured too. The fact is, prosperity makes a vast deal of difference in our goodness and amiability. Old ladies and old cats, and, for the matter of that, young ones too, are all sweetness and goodness while there is plenty of comforts and cream ; but when they disappear, and troubles and dry bones come, these pinks of perfection are very apt to turn crusty and scratch. I should, for one ; and you ought to commend my honesty in confessing it ; while at the same time you should say, " Aunt Fanny, that would be the very time when you ought to behave the best."

Ah, yes, my good little hearts ! but I will tell you a great secret : that grown people never come to perfection any more than you, my darlings. We must all struggle and fight for goodness, and never stop trying and praying for help to attain it.

And now, here is a very good proverb, which I hope you will learn by heart, even if you do not quite understand it :—

“He that is *good* will infallibly become better, and he that is *bad* will as certainly become worse ; for vice, virtue, and time, are three things that *never stand still*.”

And now we will go back to our story.

As Mrs. Jones, the stout housekeeper, stood at the door, a little girl, in a clean calico dress and sun-bonnet, with a small covered basket on her arm, came timidly up the steps, and, in a soft trembling voice, said,—

“Please, ma’am, may I speak to Doctor Mason?”

“Oh dear no, child, it’s not likely,” replied the housekeeper ; master is busy ; he has no time to attend to you.”

“But—please—I want to ask him about a sick person,” faltered Susy.

Mrs. Jones took another look at her through

her spectacles, and this time, seeing she was not a beggar, in spite of her bare feet and the basket on her arm, she told her to walk into the hall, and she would ask the doctor to come and speak to her.

Susy ventured timidly in, and sat down on the very edge of one of the great hall-chairs, while the housekeeper, tapping at a door at the other end of the hall, went in and said something in a pleasant, respectful manner. Poor Susy was wondering why the tones of her voice sounded so very differently when she spoke to Doctor Mason, and why poor children were always in the way; and her little heart was swelling quite full of sorrow, when suddenly a door opened opposite where she sat, and the doctor himself came out. He held out his hand to the little girl, and asked her, just as kindly as if she had been well dressed, what was her name, and what he could do to help her.

“If you please, Doctor Mason, I am Susy Grey,”

replied the little girl, modestly. "I live in Parker's Woods with grandma; and, oh dear! this morning she fell on the door-step and broke her arm,—and she must have a doctor"—here Susy's voice trembled, and a great sob rose in her throat.

"Well, my dear child, I will go and see your grandmother directly. Don't cry."

"But I have not any money to pay you, Doctor Mason, and so I thought I would ask you to take my pet chicken instead; she is very fat and nice;" and she stooped down and let Chickabiddy hop out of the basket on the floor.

Chickabiddy gave a joyful "cluck" at finding herself released, and straightway she hopped up on her little mistress' shoulder, as she had been taught to do.

It was too much for Susy; she dropped the basket, her little apron went up to her eyes, and she burst out crying.

The good doctor seated himself on the chair and took her on his knee. He talked to her and comforted her, wiping away her tears with his soft handkerchief, until she was quieted; then, smoothing her curls with his hand, he asked her,—“So you love your chicken very much, do you?”

“Indeed I do,” said Susy; “but then you know I could not let dear grandma suffer.”

“But suppose I set her arm without asking anything in return?”

“Oh, I could not let you do that!” cried Susy, earnestly; “grandma would not like to be a beggar!”

“Little independence,” said the Doctor, laughing. Well, Mrs. Jones, I see we must give her her own way; so, if you will take the chicken and tell John to bring round my carriage, Susy and I will hurry off to grandma as fast as we can.”

A ride in a carriage! Susy almost forgot her

griefs at this delightful prospect ; and, during the ride, the doctor, who seemed to take a wonderful interest in her, asked so many questions,—how they lived, whether she could read and write, what supported her and her grandmother, and twenty things beside,—that her tongue had to work very hard to tell him all he wished to know. A soft, rosy bloom came into her pale face, and her eyes sparkled brightly in her happiness at having found a friend.

When they arrived at the little house in the woods, they found the poor old woman suffering from the fracture, but quiet and cheerful. Susy ran quickly to her side to tell her the happy news of what a friend she had found, and in a short time the poor arm was set and bathed and nicely bandaged up by the good doctor, and he had given Susy full directions how it was to be cared for. Then he bid them good-bye, and told the little girl she must come whenever she could and see Chicka-

biddy, who should live in his yard as comfortable as a chicken could be.

It was not the last of the good doctor's kindness either; for every few days he came to see how his patient improved; and many a little pail of soup and nice fresh loaf, not to speak of other good things, was sent to the little house in the woods by Mrs. Jones's own hands, who was a very kind old soul after all.

When the good old woman was quite well, what do you think that kind Doctor Mason proposed? Why, that Susy should come to his house every day, to assist Mrs. Jones and be taught by her to read and sew; while grandma should leave her lonely cottage and come to live in the village, where he would help her to find better work than knitting woollen stockings.

Happy little Susy! no longer obliged to sew on buttons all day. She looked so sweet and pretty in her new calico frock and her first pair of boots

and stockings, and improved so fast under Mrs. Jones's care, that I should not wonder if Dr. Mason adopted her for his little daughter some fine day.

As to Chickabiddy, she flourished and grew fat with the other chickens in the doctor's yard, and before very long had a pretty brood of chickens scampering about after her, who were the very pictures of their mother. You will say hers was a far better fate than fell to poor Yellowlegs and Redcomb. She loved and remembered Susy to the end of her days; and old grandma many a time would say, "Who could have thought so much good fortune would come about through one little white chicken?" So this is the pleasant end of the Fourth Part. How do you like it?

The children were enchanted with the happy termination of Chickabiddy's adventures, and were all eagerness to know how Cockspur fared. Quite

a chorus of hopes passed round that he, too, would have real good luck ;—so, after the refreshment of an apple apiece, Aunt Fanny began to read the Fifth and last Part of the chicken history. Here it is.

PART V.

COCKSPUR'S STORY.

AND now we come to the last of the four little chickens,—Cockspur. He and Chickabiddy were both saucy little creatures, always first to speak up and answer back anybody and everybody; so Cockspur, when he found himself alone on the road, instead of feeling a bit afraid, only perked up his little head and chirped,—“Peep, peep! *I'm* the boy to make my fortune! See how big *I* am! peep, peep!” Then he gave a hop, skip, and jump in the air, and marched along, swelling and strutting, and trying to crow.

All at once he spied, hiding under a fence, a small gray chicken, with a very meek, helpless air, who also seemed to be lost. Up he marched at

once, and began with a patronising sniff, "Peep, peep! My little dear, does your mother know you're out? You're much too young and delicate to be running about by yourself! peep, peep!"

"Peep, peep! Why, I got lost, and I'm so frightened! peep, peep!" chirped the other chicken, ducking her head on one side.

"Peep, peep! don't be afraid," answered Cockspur. "*I'm not afraid; see how brave I am. Suppose you come along with me. I'll take care of you! peep, peep!*"

"Peep, peep! Oh, will you let me go with you?" cried the small chicken, gratefully.

"Peep, peep! Of course I will," said Cockspur. "You shall be my little wife, and we'll make a tour of the world together. Peep, peep!" By "the world" Cockspur meant all the way down to the village, and past the windmill down to the little tumble-down old woman's. His mother had made the journey once in a hen-coop, and she

assured her children they could not imagine what an immense place the world was.

So the two chickens hopped along side by side, Cockspur showing his little wife, whose name was Speckleback, which were the best places to walk. At noon he scratched up a fine dinner of worms for her, with all the gallantry of my Lord Ruckatucktiruski himself; and at sundown helped her to squeeze through a fence into a field of sweet new-mown hay, where they soon found a nice roost in a hay-mow, and cuddled up together as comfortable as two little chickens could be.

Next morning, very early, who should come plump on our travellers but one of the farm-boys, who, thinking they had run away from his master's barn-yard, popped them unceremoniously into his hat, and walked off with them to the poultry-yard, though Cockspur indignantly shouted at him,—
“Peep, peep! Here! what are you doing with a gentleman and his wife? Be off! we want to go

on our travels! Peep, peep!” All this fine tirade, however, was lost on the boy, who understood nothing except the “peep, peep.”

The other chickens in the barn-yard received the small strangers very kindly, though some of the tall roosters looked perfectly petrified with astonishment when Cockspur hopped up to them and chirped out,—“Peep, peep! how are you, old cocks? Peep, peep!”

“Did you ever know such impudence?” blustered a long-legged Shanghai from China to a Dorking. “Shall we give him a trouncing?”

“Oh, let him be,” said a Spanish cock as black as jet. “He’s a poor little snipe any way;” and he walked proudly off, hopped up on a box, and gave a loud “Cockadoodledoo!”

After a few days Cockspur and Speckleback made acquaintance with all the gentry of the yard, and lived very happy and contented. Even the big cocks were soon more amused than angry at

Cockspur's impudence ; and when, after two whole months, he strutted proudly about the yard, with the sauciest little scarlet comb and the whitest tail-feathers ever seen, they all allowed that he was really quite a dandy.

One morning the whole poultry-yard was amazed by a most prodigious clatter coming from Cockspur's particular roost. His little wife was perched up on a big stone, crying,—“Tuck-a-tuck-ti-tuck-tuck-ti-ruck-tuck-ti-rawki !” as loud as she could, while Cockspur was dancing up and down on the fence, and crowing like a house afire.

Out bustled a whole crowd of hens, and rushed up to Speckleback. “What is it, my dear ?” they inquired in the same cluck.

“Oh, tuck-a-tuck-a-tuck !” cried Speckleback, “I've got an egg ! tuck-tuck-tuck-tuck-tuck ! how glad I am ! tuck-tuck-tuck ! tuck-tuck-tuck ! ti-rawki !”

This great event, it was agreed by all the old

hens, was the most astonishing thing they ever heard of ; and, amid plenty of tuck-tucking, crowing, peeping, and bustling, it was concluded that Mr. and Mrs. Cockspur ought to give a party in honour of the occasion.

Accordingly, as soon as the poultry-girl was out of sight, Speckleback and her husband scampered off towards the house, where they had heard nice things were to be got for the picking-up, to find something for supper. I'm afraid they helped themselves to several tit-bits which didn't belong to them ; but then they were only chickens, you know, and had never been told how wrong it was to steal.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the party, which took place under the big apple-tree, was ready to commence. The commonest and greediest chickens came first, of course, for they wanted to see the most and eat the most of anybody, which is always the way with vulgar people. So, after they had

spoken to Mr. and Mrs. Cockspur, they went and took places as near the supper-table as they could, in order to make a rush when the time came.

It was lucky the ball-room consisted of the whole poultry-yard, for the company arrived so fast that it was a wonder some of them were not squeezed flat. The Chinese mandarin, in his yellow robe, came last, as is usual with fashionable people, accompanied by the Spanish cock, Don Rolebolero. The Spaniard's feathers were as black and shining as satin, with beautiful reflections of green, blue, and red, so that he quite dazzled the eyes of the company.

They were followed by their families; and the rear was brought up by the ushers, six white bantams, in ruffled trousers and red boots.

When all the company had arrived the ball began in good earnest. The Polish cock and the Dorking gave a grand exhibition of sparring, with green peas stuck on the sharp points of their spurs.

Then the Spanish don treated the company to one of his national dances, which consisted in hopping up and down on one leg, and shaking his head at the same time till you would have thought it must drop off with fatigue; after which he whirled round on the tips of his claws so fast that you couldn't tell the difference between his head and his tail; and the Shanghai cock was obliged to take a short walk in the opposite direction, for it made him quite sea-sick. At last the Don wound up, out of breath, saying,—“There! what do you think of *that*?”

Everybody declared it was splendid; and then Cockspur begged some of his friends to amuse the company with a concerted piece.

At first, of course, all the ladies declared they couldn't possibly,—they had *such* bad colds there wasn't a single cackle left in them; while the gentlemen leaned against stones, cast up their eyes, and scratched their beaks with their left

claws. But, of course, they all agreed to sing at last,—nobody ever *really* means to refuse, bless your heart! and ranging themselves in a row, they began the beautiful finale of that splendid opera, “The Death of poor Chanticleer:”—

First Verse.

Solo Soprano, by SIGNORA ROLEBOLERO

Oh, tuckituk, tuckituk, tuk,
Oh, rawki tirawki a-too,
Hoppeti kicketi duk,
Tweedle dee hi ! gee ! boo !

Second Verse.

Solo, by the Contralto MRS. SHANGHAI.

Tucky tuk, tuk ; tr-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-rucky tuk,
Ruk, tuk, kickery ki, yi, i—
Squeedle weedle weedle, cheedle cheedle cheedle,
Tweedle dee tweedle dum tr-r-r-r-r-r——i i !

Third Verse.

Grand Chorus of COCKS.

Cock-a-doodle doo ! cock-a-doodle doo !
Timmy rimmy rido ! who's afraid of you ?

Cro-o-o-o-o-o-o- ! Too, roo, rooooo —

Bowdy ! dowdy ! howdy ! wowdy !! *hi* GEE BOO !!!

This splendid performance was applauded to the skies. Every one declared they had never heard anything equal to it in the whole course of their lives ; and just as they were in the midst of their delight, Speckleback wisely ordered the six ushers to announce supper.

Of course, the vulgar folks said it was very sensible in her, and dived head-first at the suppers-table ; but the ushers were too quick for them, and kept them back until the Mandarin, the Don, and all the nobility and gentry had taken places, when the others said it was very disagreeable and just what they expected.

The supper was splendid. Bread-crumbs, green apples, mince-meat, snails on the half-shell, fuzzy caterpillars (those with red eyes being kept for the Mandarin's family), earth-worms, pepper-corns, peas-pods, bumblebees, and small pebbles, were among

the delicacies. The plates and dishes were oyster-shells, and the table was splendidly ornamented with broken glass and shiny mica-stones; and every guest had a private dish of sand to flavour his meal, and was presented with a paper cornucopia, as he left the table, smeared over with molasses, which was covered with bluebottle flies. The farmer's wife had caught them in this way, and Cockspur and Speckleback had made off with the papers in high delight.

Mr. and Mrs. Cockspur waited on the Mandarin and the Don, and the six ushers on the rest of the company. Everybody was helped to as much as they could possibly eat, and the common people insisted on having two oyster-shells apiece of everything, so they could take some home for next day.

The party broke up after supper, and went home declaring they had had a splendid evening, and would give a ball for Cockspur and Speckleback as soon as possible.

But, ah dear, oh dear!—would you believe it?—while the chickens were having such a good time at the party, the farmer's wife came to the poultry-house, and going straight to Speckleback's nest, took her pretty little white egg, and carried it off for her own supper!

Poor Speckleback's grief, when she discovered her loss, was really distressing to behold, and Cockspur tried in vain to console her. However, three or four old hens, to whom she confided her troubles, comforted her, telling her their eggs had been taken again and again, yet they didn't fret, but went to work and laid another; and they advised her to do the same. So Speckleback dried her eyes, and went to sleep feeling better; and the very next morning she laid another beautiful white egg, which quite consoled her for the one she had lost.

The farmer's wife walked off with that too, I am sorry to say, and Speckleback never got a

chance to collect enough for a brood until the next spring. At last, however, she managed to hide away eight, and then commenced the grand business of hatching them out.

The good little creature sat like a perfect statue on her nest, hardly daring to wink for fear it should injure her chickens. The kind old hens visited her every day, and gave her quantities of good advice, while as for Cockspur, he was a perfect model of a husband, and brought her all the nicest tit-bits he could find for breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, supper, and to keep in her pocket.

It took I don't know how long before the famous eggs were hatched, but I think it must have been at least eleventy-ten days, when one fine morning, "crack" went every shell, and out walked eight of the sweetest little chickens that ever were seen! Five of them were white like Cockspur, and three speckled like their mother; two were cocks, and the rest pullets.

If the good little couple had made noise enough over their first egg, it seemed as though they would crack their throats with delight at the eight chickens. Of course they declared that they were superior to any chickens that ever were hatched, and "peeped" with very peculiar sweetness. When they had been admired sufficiently, Speckleback marshalled them in a row, and pranced out with them into the middle of the hen-yard, looking as happy as a queen, while Cockspur swelled so with importance that he came near bursting out of his feathers altogether.

Well, now that our chicken was the father of a family, he was received with all the honours by the other fowls, who acknowledged him one of themselves. They made him first lieutenant of the Cocktail Guard on the spot, and allowed him to vote in elections, and challenge any other bird who might offend him.

Things went on very pleasantly for some time

after these great events, when one morning a monstrous commotion was raised in the hen-house by the news that the magnificent Don Rolebolero was dead ! At first the fowls could hardly believe their ears (for chickens *have* ears, whatever you may think), but a visit to his roost proved it to be too true. He had choked himself trying to swallow an eel's head whole ; and in spite of the attentions of Doctor Drake, who gave him an enormous dose of Drake's plantation bitters (but who, I fear, was a sad quack after all), he gave one squawk and one frantic kick up in the air, wobbled about for a minute on one leg, like a liberty-pole* in a high breeze, and then tumbled over on his back as dead as King Cheops' mummy.

The whole poultry-yard instantly went into the

* A " liberty pole " is a very tall slender flagstaff, which is generally set up in the centre of a village green, and on the top of which the American flag is attached on holidays.

deepest mourning, by dipping their heads into the blackest mud-puddle they could find ; and then marched solemnly past the poor Don, who lay flat on his back, with his claws drawn stiffly up, his wings spread out, and all the beautiful lustre gone from his feathers, looking very dead indeed.

The funeral took place in the afternoon. Twenty-seven hens worked hard for two hours, scratching out a grave for him ; and when it was ready, the grand procession started from the hen-house in the following order :—

First marched the Cocktail Guard, four in a row, all with their tails hanging down disconsolately, and a black rag tied round the left leg.

Then came the distressed widow and her family, with their left wings over one eye, crying, while the other eye was looking round to see the procession.

Next marched six of the tallest cocks in the yard, headed by the Chinese mandarin from Shan-

ghai, with the body of Don Rolebolero, which they dragged along with one claw apiece, on a cabbage-leaf for a funeral bier, and covered with a black plant by way of a pall. Each of the bearers had dipped his scarlet comb in a mud puddle to turn it black, and wore a black rag on the left leg; and the mournful train was brought up behind by all the other fowls in the yard.

Unluckily, as everybody wanted to be in the procession, there was no one left to look on but a blind goose and a scarecrow; but that made no difference, as every one was so absorbed in grief. The scarecrow, who was a distinguished poet, composed the following ode, which was thought very touching by everybody.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE CHEVALIER
ROLEBOLERO.

BY MR. SCRATCHPOLL, THE DISTINGUISHED POET.

“There was a superb chanticleer,
So brave he could never know fear;

To his nest he retired,
 And abruptly expired,—
 Which finished that bold Chevalier.”

(Here the metre turned into something else, as
 is usual with great poets.)

“ No words can tell our woe and grief,
 Tittery-nan de tiree-oh !
 It really passes all belief ;
 Tow ran now, too ran noo—
 Tittery-nan de tiree-oh !

“ The shades of night were falling fast,
 Tittery-nan de tiree-oh !
 When he gave up the ghost at last,
 Tow ran now, too ran noo,—
 Tittery-nan de tiree-oh !

“ And mid the dismal depths of woe,
 Tittery-nan de tiree-oh !
 We seem to hear his clarion crow,—

(Saying,—)

“ Shool shool shooli oh !
 Shooli pollywog chingaringro

If ever you hear a tadpole crow,—
Remember Ro-le-bo-le-ro !”

This beautiful ode was set to music by the blind goose, who was a distinguished musician,—and if any of you, dear little hearts, want to know the tune, you must come to Aunt Fanny, and she will sing it for you.

When the procession arrived at the grave, the pall-bearers drew poor Don Rolebolero to the edge, and laid him carefully in the earth. Then they went to work pell-mell, with claws and beak, scratching the mould over him; and when it was done, they all marched home in the same order, sniffing and sobbing in the greatest grief.

I don't know that they put any tombstone over him, but I believe they erected a monument of corn-cobs to his memory instead.

The day after the funeral, every cock, hen, and chicken in the yard was assembled at a grand national convention, for, now Don Rolebolero was

dead, they were in want of a new King of the yard, and Chief Cock-of-the-walk. The Chinese mandarin mounted on a dunghill and made the following speech :—

“Gentlemen and ladies ! Cocks, hens, and small fry ! hatched or in the shell ! As our beloved friend and noble King, Don Rolebolero, is expired and dead of an eel’s head—

“ Which choked him a few,
And smothered him too,
And killed him, which is worse,”

we, the senior roosters of this yard, have called you together to vote for a new King in his place.

“I do not speak of my own long services, my large family, the battles I have won, the length of my legs, the elegance of my yellow robe, or the stateliness of my strut,—things all eminently suited to a King. I do not, fellow-citizens, I repeat, lay my own merits before you, but simply

ask you to vote for the cock you think most deserves it, as King of the Poultry-yard, Grand perpetual General-in-Chief of the Cocktail Guard, and Cock-of-the walk of the yellow button."

No sooner had the Mandarin finished this modest address, than Cockspur, who had been listening, and swelling with fury and ambition, bounced up on the dunghill beside him ! treading on the Shanghai's toes, and nearly putting out one of his eyes with a flirt of his tail.

But Cockspur never minded that ; he only gave a defiant crow, flapped his wings, kicked up his heels, and shouted at the top of his voice :—

"Fellow-Fowls ! Ladies !! and members of the Cocktail Guard !!! Having heard (with disgust, I am sure) the conceited speech of our honourable friend in the rhubarb and magnesia-coloured coat, which must remind everybody of indigestion and brimstone, you will welcome me with joy as I mount this dunghill to address you !

“Fellow-Cocktails! Shall we stand this any longer? Is the yellow-buttoned minion of tyranny to trample on the liberties of free and enlightened Fowldom? Never, my friends! We don’t see it! It won’t go down! Let us sharpen our spurs, brighten our beaks, furbish our feathers, and with eagle majesty sweep the tyrant from our pathway, by voting for one who will reflect undying honour on our choice! That one—need I say?—is MYSELF!!!!”

The effect of this audacious speech was tremendous! Everybody screamed out at once,—crowing, clucking, flapping their wings, and making more noise than schoolboys on a holiday. Poor Speckleback, in the midst of the crowd, nearly died with terror lest something dreadful should happen to her husband; while as to the Mandarin, he was so perfectly petrified with astonishment that all the feathers came off the top of his head, leaving it as bald as a flat-iron!

Cockspur, nothing daunted, crowed like a house afire, and “jumped Jim Crow” at him; and in an instant more, Shanghai, Polander, and Dorking were all round him, with fury quivering in every feather. Cockspur stuck up his beak and flourished one spur in the air in defiance; but now, with a cock-a-doodle doo like a trumpet-call, the superb Polander sprang forward like lightning, boxed his ears, twitched his ruff, kicked him with his claws, and finally challenged him to come on and fight if he had the spirit of a game cock!

Poor Cockspur! he could not refuse to fight;—and now, indeed, you see the evils of indulging in ambition and pride. The Polander was much the stronger of the two,—and before long Cockspur was stretched on the ground, wounded and bleeding, and almost dead! Ah dear! oh dear! when will chickens and children learn to control their wicked dreadful passions, and live in peace and

happiness with one another? Here was a dreadful catastrophe to happen to one of our four little chickens!

This, of course, finished the fight; and amid the greatest confusion the Polander was unanimously elected King of the yard. But he did not enjoy the honour long, for with a loud screech the Shanghai flew at him, almost bursting with rage! He vowed the Polander had cheated him; for he had promised to make him General-in-Chief in return for fighting his battles,—as he had the gout in his left claw. The luckless King was cuffed, kicked, and pecked by the Mandarin, just as he had cuffed and kicked Cockspur, until he tumbled senseless over the body of that small fowl; then mounting on top of both of them, and giving one of the awful squawks that only a Shanghai can, the Mandarin loudly proclaimed that he would serve out in the same way all who did not instantly vote for HIM as King.

“So, come on!” he screeched, hopping up and down like a pith witch.* “Vote for any one you choose, by all means; but I’ll finish you if you do,—that’s all!”

In the greatest hurry everybody instantly voted for the Shanghai, not caring to be knocked down by such a great monster: so the noble Chinaman got the election after all. Whoever heard of such conduct?

As to poor Cockspur and the gallant Polander, they lay groaning together, with nobody to comfort them but their own wives, for every one else had gone off to a grand election dinner, to which the Mandarin had instantly invited them.

The poor little hens brought water in their beaks

* A pith witch is a droll little toy made of pith with a lead weight at one end—the other end has a comical face painted upon it. When you put the witch on its head, it instantly pops over and alights on the leaden end.

to their husbands, and did 'what they could to comfort them, while the cocks jointly agreed they had been great fools to fight at all. At last they felt a little better, and limped off to their own roosts, very much damaged in feathers and mortified in spirits.

However, a few days calmed their minds, and made them conclude there was nothing like a quiet life, as even a King couldn't eat a grain more corn after his election than he could before.

After this, the poultry-yard was governed with perfect tranquillity. Speckleback presented her husband with a pretty brood of chickens every year, who always choose husbands and wives from the family of the Polander. Cockspur in time was promoted to be Major-General of the Cocktail Guard; and when the old Shanghai died in a fit of apoplexy, our brave little rooster was unanimously elected King of the chicken realm. He lived to a

green and very tough old age, beloved by the whole population of the yard, who frequently spoke of him by the complimentary title of

COCKSPUR THE FEARLESS.

CONCLUSION.

"OH! is that all?" cried the children, as Aunt Fanny folded up her manuscript. "What a nice, nice history! Couldn't you keep on writing stories about birds and animals?"

"Yes," she answered, looking very demure. "I have been writing lately about six monkeys."

"Monkeys? Enchanting! How *did* you come to think of it? What are they like? are they full of mischief? oh, do tell us!"

"Well, I will. But first you must answer the words 'Just like me' to four short statements I shall make. Are you ready?"

"All ready!" cried the children, their eyes flashing with eagerness.

"Well:—I took a walk in the woods."

"Just like me!" cried the children.

"I found a lovely little glade."

“Just like me!” cried the children.

“I ate apples and cakes.”

“Just like me!” cried the children.

“And I met six funny monkeys.”

“JUST LIKE ME!!” cried the children.

“O—h!!” they screamed, laughing and running to kiss her at such a rate that they tumbled her over sideways on the grass,—“oh! *we* are the monkeys! It’s too delightful! are you really going to put us in a book?”

“You’re in already!” said a deep voice; and there, laughing, behind a tree, was “Uncle Fanny,” who had come to take his wife home to New York. He held a letter in his hand, which Aunt Fanny opened the minute she got it. There seemed to be another note inside. The children could not help watching her face as she read. At first a happy expression brightened her features; then, as she read the second note, this softened into a look of so much love, that Lou whispered to Sophie,—“That other note is from some little child. I am sure of it.”

“Well,” said Uncle Fanny,—“don’t you mean to let us know what the President of the United States has been saying to you? Has he sent you a small present of a basketful of greenbacks?”*

“He couldn’t write a letter half so charming as this. It’s worth a dozen basketsful of greenbacks,” said Aunt Fanny. “It’s a sweet little letter from a darling ‘good little heart.’ I want to kiss her this very minute.”

“So do I,” cried each of the children. “Please read her letter, Aunt Fanny,—please do!”

“But I can’t read such loving praise out loud. I like to keep it all to myself. It makes me blush, for I am afraid I don’t deserve it. Here, Sophie, you may take the dear little letter and read it to the rest. Run away, so I cannot hear.”

With joyful thanks the children raced off to a little distance, and Sophie, with her sweet voice, read this:

* Bank notes with green backs is the national paper currency in the United States since the war between North and South.

DEAR AUNT FANNY,—

Lizzie and Pinny want me to tell you how much we like your “Fairy Nightcaps,” and how much we think all little boys and girls ought to thank you, and love you for making these sweet books. We laughed so much over funny “Sly-boots,” but we cried about dear Charley.

All send you kisses of love, and thanks, my good Aunt Fanny, with yours,

Very fondly,

MINNIE.*

“Oh, what a lovely little girl!” exclaimed Lou, and they rushed back to inquire if Aunt Fanny knew her.

“Oh, yes,” she answered; “she is the same dear little Minnie of whom I told you the first day in the wood.”

“What! the one who lives in that perfectly delightful farm-house?”

“Yes, a wonderful fairy farm-house, for there is

* A daughter of the author of “My Farm at Edgewood.”

not another like it in the land. Sunnyside was a beautiful home, a charmed spot, when the great Washington Irving lived there, but his house lacked the blessing of children—that ‘link between angels and men;’ and little Minnie’s home is just that much nearer Heaven.”

“Oh, Aunt Fanny! We love her—dear little thing; please tell her so when you answer her letter.”

“Yes, I will; and I will dedicate my next book to the darling English children who are now reading about her, and that will make them feel like old friends.

And so I have: this very book you are now reading. I must finish it quickly, because it is long enough; but it *does* seem, that for every story I write, two more come into my busy brain—not made up, oh no! I hear so much about all the little darlings wherever I go, and I love them so dearly, that the stories seem to come to me, and never stop coming.

If you, my good little hearts who read, like the good little hearts about whom I have written, just go or write to Mr. Edmonston or Mr. Douglas, No. 88 Princes Street, in Edinburgh, and tell them to tell me, and then who knows but there will be another set of them next year.

That God may bless and keep all my darlings, is the earnest prayer of their loving

AUNT FANNY.

P.S.—Oh, how sorry I am to say good-bye to my new English and Scottish darlings. I wish some of them would write me each a dear little letter, just directed to “‘Aunt Fanny,’ care of Messrs. Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh, Scotland.’” I should be sure to get them, and *quite* sure to answer them.

THE END.

